

Abstract:

This research examines a possible welfare role of transport trade unions in the face of HIV/AIDS, particularly in the trucking industry. It uses SATAWU as a case study to see what the union, as a transport union, is doing to fight the spread of HIV in the industry. This study was motivated by a lack of previous research on the subject and also the claim of some studies that truck drivers are partly responsible for the spread of HIV in rural Southern Africa. The research was done through in-depth interviews with SATAWU officials, members of the Road Freight Association, truck drivers and other stakeholders.

The main argument in this research is that although government has policies and programmes in place to fight the spread of HIV, there are certain things the unions can do to help seeing that they have more influence on the workers and they have easier access to them. The study examines programmes that are already in place and what is still lacking especially in relation to union involvement. The research also investigates union involvement in existing programmes and establishes what truck drivers and their families think should be done to fight the scourge and its aftermath. SATAWU remains remotely involved despite the spread of the scourge among truckers and the effects thereof on the family. Truckers remain vulnerable and so are their families.