



Sustainable Livelihood Consultants

Baseline Survey for HIV Prevention and Economic Empowerment along Transport Corridors in Southern Africa

Client: International Labour Organisation



Consultancy team

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Assignment

In July / August 2010, Sustainable Livelihoods Consultancy was commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to conduct a "Baseline Survey for HIV Prevention and Economic Empowerment along Transport Corridors in Southern Africa". The aim of the study was to provide an insight into the HIV/AIDS and TB prevention programmes being implemented in three South African gateway sites (Skilpadhek [Zeerust], Lebombo and Ventersburg communities); and investigate business opportunities that may generate income to vulnerable target groups along these transport corridors. A particular focus was given to participants in the informal economy. The study sought to:

1. Investigate how informal traders in selected locations respond to HIV&AIDS challenges to their business and what support they receive from other partners
2. Identify partners providing HIV&AIDS and TB prevention services to informal traders, small business and cooperatives along selected transport corridors and cross border areas
3. Identify weaknesses in existing HIV&AIDS initiative targeting transport workers

The research methodology included a desktop study, structured surveys, qualitative interviews and rapid appraisals of health facilities

Findings

There are a number of well implemented initiatives focused on the health needs of South African transport workers, exemplified in the Trucking Wellness Programme for drivers and associated communities and bolstered through efforts by provincial Departments of Health and local clinics. As a result the general level of understanding of health issues amongst participants was high, although non South African transport workers do not share this level of understanding. There is large and relatively non-organised informal trade attached to the transport sector, predominately providing goods (such as meals, groceries, personal items) and services (including illicit services of currency trading, and prostitution) to truckers. The lack of formal sector employment opportunities has meant that informal traders commonly commence business as survivalist operators, although a number earn above minimum wage levels. Trading location and access to passing trade is a key determination of success, leading to conglomerations of micro-enterprises in key transport nodes. Structural conditions of poverty in these areas mean that the informal economy of prostitution and transactional sex provided by anecdotally very young women is a commonplace activity. With respect to health education this activity must be further investigated, with factors of peer group pressure better understood. There also remains opportunity to better synergise truck stops and informal sector business locations at each of the research sites.