

## **Korea Institute of Labor Safety and Health (KILSH)**

KILSH was launched in September 2003 from the experience of the Joint Research Committee for Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in October 2002. The slogans of KILSH are workplace-oriented action, workplace-oriented expertise and class-consciousness.

The members of KILSH consist of workers, activists, physicians, and students. We are trying to build a nation-wide center for the workers' health and safety movement based on labor participation and the community activities, to mobilize workers to take the control over their workplaces with overcoming the professionalism and corporatism of the trade union movement, and to pursue the ultimate change of society.

One of main activities of KILSH for the last two years is SHARPS. KILSH has been dedicating itself for strengthening SHARPS and taken the main roles in organizing not only the victims but also supporters from various fields such as unions, academia, politics, students, and ordinary citizens. Recently KILSH has been trying to widen the scope of SHARPS into gender-oriented approach by organizing a group of female workers, labor activists and scholars based on feminism. Also KILSH set up an international team focusing on the international approach to strengthen organizing power of electronics workers.

Researches of KILSH in the recent years have been based on the long relationship with the traditional blue collar workers' union as well as diversified into informal, unorganized, and service workers reflecting the changes of workforce in Korea;

(1) since 2011, KILSH has a joint research of working condition and the musculoskeletal symptoms of the workers on Gyeonggi branch of Korea Metal Workers' Union, with survey of 1,841 workers and interview of 106 workers. The result of this research will be used in making union's strategy to challenge the increased workload and to get back workers' control on the production.

(2) in 2012, KILSH joined the research on the working condition of school lunch program in Gangwon province. By joint approach with the Korean Public & Social Services and Transportation Workers' Union(KPTU), more than 1,500 out of all 2,863 workers' participated the surveillance, which contributed KPTU's organizing of new union members. The study results raised the inhumane workload and need to increase the employment in this sector by the government.

(3) KILSH had a joint study on the stress and the cultural structure of workplace of workers in the non-life insurance company, LIG, with its' union. To cover the nationwide distributed workers, we developed an online surveillance program which could organize 952 workers' participation. Together with depth interviews with 45 workers, the study showed the detail reality of working condition in this sector for the first time in Korea as well as contributed to the union's policy development.

(4) since 2012, KILSH studied the working condition and health status of electrical power plants' workers. The Korean government divided the public electrical production system into smaller companies and has been pursuing privatization, with harsh union-busting to remove the most powerful barrier of its neoliberal policy. KILSH exposed how badly these changes have influenced the working environment and provided the scientific and class-conscious reason why the privatization policy should be withdrawn, through the surveillance of more than 1,000 workers.

Other main activities of KILSH include participation of several solidarity networks such as;

(1) Joint action for workers right to health, which is the network of OSH groups. Recent

focus of this network is to strengthen the OSH law, especially the punishment of the employer on the occupational death.

- (2) Joint committee for subway workers' safety and health, which was originated from the ten years' history and struggle of the workers and advocates focusing on the mental disorders and suicides of the drivers of subway train.
- (3) Committee for the workers' memorial day in April 28, consisting of OSH groups for the temporary joint action every year.
- (4) in Seoul, KILSH has joined in the "Future of workers" network with KCTU and several labor groups. This network has been working for several years to organize workers in Southern area of Seoul where there are a lot of young unorganized IT workers. Similar with it, in the Gyeongnam province, KILSH has joined in the "Finding Hope of Noksan workers". Noksan is an industrial park, where a lot of small-sized factories are located and lots of unorganized workers including migrant workers are working.
- (5) Local network to support migrant workers both in Gyeonggi province and Busan city.
- (6) Network for the youth workers' human right.
- (7) Joint committee of asbestos issues in Busan city, contributing to organize the victims in local area and to investigate the local distribution of asbestos. KILSH also has worked as one of main actors in BANKO.

Since the last several years, KILSH is discussing the future, focusing on; (1) a sort of local center of workers which can provide OSH services with both high quality and workers substantial participation; and (2) an international work with local grassroot groups to strengthen workers' power to challenge the neoliberal globalization.