

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

### 1. Who we are

KILSH, the Korea Institute of Labor Safety and Health, is the outcome of the decade's struggle for health and safety of workers in Korea.

The death of a teen-age worker, Moon SongMyun from the overexposure to mercury in 1988 provoked struggles for more healthy and safe workplace in Korea. Korean workers' health and safety movement is ascribed to a series of significant fights: a collective claim of workers' compensation for occupational diseases caused by chronic exposure to Carbon disulfide in WonJin rayon company in 1992, and a struggle in 1999 that originated in the suicide of an injured worker, Lee SangKwan who was afraid of being cut off from the medical care covered by workers' compensation. The rapid increase of work-related musculoskeletal disorders at workplace has become an important issue to the Korean trade union movement.

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 and physicians. We are trying to build a nation-wide center for the workers' health and safety movement built on labor participation, and mobilize workers to take the control over their workplaces.

To overcome the professionalism and corporatism of the trade union movement, we are constructing nation-wide regional systems based on the community activities, and pursuing the ultimate change of society.

### 2. Goals

- To secure the healthful and safe work environment
- To achieve workers' control over the workplace
- To accomplish a democratic and class-conscious labor movement, and the liberation of labor

### 3. What we do

1) Construction of a nationwide coalition for the healthy and safe work environment and workers' control over the workplaces

We try to not only organize a nationwide network of labor safety and health movement but also join and spread out any important local struggles. Our goals will only be achieved by the national coalition.

2) Researches to develop activist schemes and strategies for workers' health and safety movement

Our research activities are meant to foster our struggles for which we find a breakthrough for expanding the frontline of labor movement.

3) Education and training to increase the capacity of workers' health and safety movement

Education and training should serve to organize workers in the shop. We assist workers to build up their own curriculum for participatory training programs.

4) Propaganda and communication to publicize workers' health and safety movement

We publish a monthly magazine, 'Ill-Ter made by workers', prepared by field workers activists, and experts in order to share the movement with public.

5) Networks to enhance the workers' health and safety movement.

Decent work incorporates workers' control over the workplaces and the breach of the Structural Adjustment Program driven by the Neo-liberal labor policy. Therefore, we seek for an international coalition to share our experience with other countries.

6) Organizational activities to keep the labor movement class-conscious

The power of labor is declining due to globalization and the intense oppression of capital. Incessant struggles and training to encourage workers to be class-conscious is also a role we do play. We refuse to remain in a local campaign of labor health and safety, but go along with the entire labor movement with a faith of democratic and class-conscious progression of the labor liberation movement.

4. What we have done so far

We have organized a series of collective workers compensation claims for musculoskeletal disorders. With the experience in the DAEWOO shipbuilding company, we extended our struggles to other industries, such as food processing plant, railroad and subway transportation companies in public sector and metal manufacturing industry as well. The strategy of collective workers compensation claims makes it possible for large numbers of workers in a factory to walk out in a way of strike, and to organize daily struggles. Through these struggles, we forced capitalists to hire more regular workers and reduce the working hours. Our aims were to alleviate the intensity of labor and build up a workers' apparatus to intervene the hazards in work environment. We struggle for workers' control over the workplaces and fight against the Neo-liberal labor policy. We also presume the problems of job strain and cardio-cerebral vascular disorders as the consequence of the capitalistic globalization. Our struggle will continue until the Neo-liberal globalization stops and workers take the whole control over the workplace.

Contact

Korea Institute of Labor Safety and Health(KILSH)

3<sup>rd</sup> F, 132-2, Yangpeong 1-Ga, Youngdeungpo-Gu., Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Telephone ; +82-2-2679-0633

E-mail ; laborr@jinbo.net

Homepage ; www.kilsh.or.kr