

Finnish survey shows that asylum-seekers have problems with working conditions – however, attitude to work positive

FIOH has published a survey describing the working conditions and work ability of asylum-seeker workers in Finland. The survey is part of the *Equal participation in networks - Immigrants in work life development networks* project (funded by the European Social Fund) and its aim is to help authorities, decision-makers, project co-ordinators and their interest groups in decision-making and preparatory work. The main data of the report have been interviews carried out according to qualitative research methods.

The conclusions of the survey show that asylum-seekers' awareness of Finnish work life should be increased by developing co-operation between different parties. In order to prevent and eliminate malpractice and exploitation at work, the authors recommend that co-operation between regional occupational safety and health actors and reception centres is developed and intensified. In addition, occupational health services (OHS) should ensure, together with the client organization, that workers with asylum-seeking backgrounds also know what OHS is and how it works.

Asylum-seekers are motivated workers, and have an extremely positive attitude to work. Work that is perceived as meaningful strengthens perceived work ability, and a positive attitude is a valuable resource for work.

The asylum-seekers interviewed had more problems with working conditions than the rest of the working population, and shortcomings in induction training. The asylum-seekers did physically strenuous work, which sometimes caused heavy tiredness and feelings of exhaustion. General awareness of occupational safety among those interviewed was inadequate. This is significant, as prevention of risks and hazards at workplaces is impossible if dangers are not recognized.

Everyone has the right to well-being at work. To instil this mindset, the authors declare a need for projects that spread good practices and models that promote work ability and health, and which are targeted towards sectors that employ workers with foreign backgrounds and unorganized small businesses.

More information: www.ttl.fi/en/research/research_projects/equalparticipation

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