

Seminar on immigrants in the cleaning trade

Presentation of the SPIR project on immigrants in the cleaning trade

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Wednesday April 2, 2008



The SPIR project on immigrants in the cleaning trade

- ~ A 3-year research project (mid 2007 - mid 2010) granted by the Ministry of Employment (Satspuljemidler)
- ~ **Aim:** How to communicate the importance of a healthy working environment to immigrants . in order to reduce attrition and work related accidents among immigrants
- ~ **Status**
 - . Field studies: September 2007 to January 2008
 - . Data analysis
 - . Planning intervention activities to be started autumn 2008



Immigrants in the Danish work force

Employment rates in 2007

- . Ethnic Danes: 77.3 %
- . Immigrants: 49.3 % Source: Statistics Denmark, 2007
- . Descendants: 60.2 %


~ A general focus on getting the unemployed out on the labour market+

Work related diseases and injuries

~ More musculoskeletal diseases and skin diseases among immigrants, relatively

- . the differences mainly explained by immigrants being employed in high risk occupations

Source: National Board of Industrial Injuries 2005



Literature on immigrants in the cleaning trade

- ~ Scientific literature
 - . limited and hard to find
- ~ Reports in Danish . more or less scientific
 - . Sector Working Environment Councils
 - . labour unions etc.
 - . Studies and instructional materials



The Danish language as the most important occupational health and safety problem

Work environment and immigrants

A study carried out early 2006 by The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)

- ~ Interviews with 10 companies: *managers* and *safety representatives*
- ~ Focus group interviews with *practitioners* on occupational health and safety or in integration of immigrants at the labour market

Limitations: none of the informants were employees with immigrant background

Source: Milller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)



Work environment and immigrants - highlights from this report

- ~ The Danish language (both written and spoken)
- ~ Cultural barriers
 - . different needs for instruction and introduction
- ~ Methods used for instruction on work tasks
- ~ Attitudes towards work and safety instructions

Source: Milller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)



The Danish language (both written and spoken)

- Arguments for demands on Danish skills
 - ~ customers/clients
 - ~ social aspects . colleagues
 - ~ safety requirements
 - ~ communication on work tasks

Language demands often not well defined

Use of English in all work related communication - and combine written instructions and pictures

Source: Miller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)



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Cultural barriers . different needs for instruction and introduction

- ~ Work tasks . more thorough instructions needed
- ~ Men and women at the same workplace
- ~ Workplace culture

Focus on a good introduction

Source: Miller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)




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Methods used for instruction on work tasks

- ~ Check lists
- ~ Mentors
- ~ Training and instruction by colleagues [sidemandsoplæring]
- ~ Training-by-doing
 - . instead of oral instructions only
- ~ Combined written and visual instructions

Source: Miller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)



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Attitudes towards work and safety instructions

- ~ In general no difference between immigrants and Danes
- ~ Immigrant background does not lead to more injuries
- ~ Earlier work experience influence attitudes towards occupational health and safety
- ~ Immigrants may accepting worse working conditions
 - . no direct examples given in this report but mentioned elsewhere:

Work environment is a luxury if you have to support family back home!

Source: Miller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)



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Work environment and immigrants

As mentioned above

Limitations: none of the informants were employees with immigrant background

Source: Miller 2006, The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)

Because a lot of initiatives were going on we decided to start with field studies

AND to focus on immigrant perspectives



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SPIR field studies

A number of different work places and training courses were chosen for their different ways to introduce new employees to the cleaning work

Our focus is on the employees - in contrast to most other recent studies in Denmark



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