

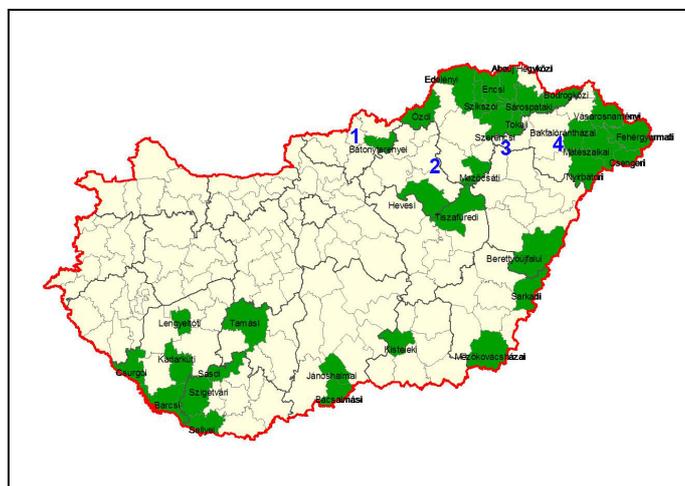
Preliminary data on the state of public work programmes in forestry

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Abstract

A public works program (PWP) is the provision of employment by the creation of predominantly public goods at a prescribed wage for those unable to find alternative employment. Recently the Hungarian government envisages large scale PWPs in order to lead people back to the labor market. In this study the social effects of a PWP program in forestry were investigated on the basis of a questionnaire filled out by around 600 participants in the northeastern part of Hungary most hardly hit by unemployment. Parallel to this a semi-structured interview was carried out among managers at the forest companies responsible for the program.



The questionnaire was distributed among participants of the PWP in four state owned forest companies. The location of the companies is shown above: 1 Ipoly Erdő, 2 Egererdő, 3 Északerdő, 4 Nyírerdő and the green areas are the depressed areas.

The questionnaire consisted of 24 basic questions and 7 questions to identify the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Altogether 620 questionnaires were sent out, and 587 questionnaires were returned. Parallel to the questionnaires a semi-structured interview was carried out with managers responsible for the PWPs at the forest companies.

The gender distribution of the returned questionnaires is 84% males and 16% females so there are a lot more men involved in forestry public work programs. About 46% of the participants have very basic education (8 elementary school classes or less), 43% are skilled workers, 10% have high school graduation and only the rest (1%) has higher education.

From the preliminary analysis of the data the following conclusions can be drawn concerning PWP programs in forestry:

- 93,3% of the people asked consider the PWP program as a possibility to work and get income, only 3% answered that this is work I am obliged to do
- Generally respondents like to work in the forest and would like to do so also in the future
- An overwhelming majority (87,1%) would choose an 8 hour occupation either in a PWP or any other job

- Also a big part of the respondents would work more if they received fuelwood as extra benefit (92,2%), or they would cultivate land to reduce their living if they were provided land for this purpose (80%)
- 73% of the workers would be willing to learn a new profession or any other skilled in order to improve their ability to get work
- Forest companies consider the PWPs as beneficial program for the company because the state is financing the public workers.

We can assume that the forests have a positive effect on people work attitude, who have been unemployed for a long time. The majority of people would like to have continues occupation, even in forestry, even with a different profession, to be able to support their families. For PWP workers would be necessary to introduce education programs.