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Governance and Participation

A Series of Policy Discussion Papers

SOLUTIONS TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF SENIOR WOMEN OFFICIALS IN THE PARTY COMMITTEES TOWARDS THE 14TH PARTY CONGRESS: EXPERIENCE FROM THUA THIEN - HUE AND LAM DONG PROVINCES

Ha Noi, December 2024

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ABBREVIATIONS

GE	Gender Equality
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union
HCMA	Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics

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REPORT SUMMARY

The study examines female officials' participation in Party committees at different levels in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong provinces, focusing on four key areas. First, it assesses successes and challenges in female representation at the provincial, district, and commune levels, where participation rates are below the national average. Second, it identifies factors influencing women's involvement in these committees. Third, it analyzes policies, laws, and implementation practices to highlight opportunities and challenges in promoting female political participation. Fourth, it proposes policy solutions to increase female representation, both generally and specifically for these two provinces, in preparation for the 2025-2030 Party committee planning and the 14th National Party Congress.

The study, conducted in November and December 2024, includes: (i) analyzing Party policies and provincial guidelines on female participation; (ii) field surveys in Thua Thien Hue (Hue City, Phu Thuong and Thuan Loc wards, Huong Thuy town, Thuy Duong and Thuy Thanh communes) and Lam Dong (Da Lat City, Wards 7 and 9, Lac Duong district, Da Nhim and Da Sar communes); (iii) seven discussion forums in each province and two scientific seminars; (iv) in-depth interviews with 12 officials per province; and (v) an online survey of 1,000 Party members in each province.

Key research findings

The report has conducted a comprehensive review and analysis of the Party's directives related to female cadre work, particularly since the issuance of Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW by the Politburo on April 27, 2007, regarding women's affairs in the context of national industrialization and modernization. Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW reaffirms the Party and State's commitment to achieving gender equality (GE) and advancing the status of Vietnamese women. Following this resolution, the Party has issued several directives to promote female participation in Party Committees, including Conclusion No. 55-KL/TW by the Party Secretariat on January 18, 2013, reinforcing the implementation of Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW; Directive No. 21-CT/TW on January 20, 2018, further strengthening women's affairs in the new context; and most recently, Directive No. 35-CT/TW by the Politburo on June 14, 2024, regarding Party congresses at all levels leading up to the 14th National Party Congress.

Party Committees at all levels have actively implemented these resolutions and directives in their respective localities. However, the proportion of female cadres participating in Party Committees at various levels remains below the targets set by Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW in 2007. To date, the percentage of female cadres in Party Committees stands at 15.96% at the provincial level, 19.63% at the district level, and 24.77% at the commune level.

The report also highlights regional and local disparities in the representation of female cadres in Party Committees. The Southeast region has the highest proportion, with 31.8% at the commune level, 27.3% at the district level, and 21.3% at the provincial level. In contrast, the Northern Midlands and Mountainous region has the lowest female representation at the commune level

(22.9%), the Mekong Delta has the lowest at the district level (16.9%), and the Central Highlands has the lowest at the provincial level (13.4%).

The report highlights that while socio-economic development in recent years has created opportunities for promoting GE in politics, several institutional challenges remain in female cadre development. Certain policies related to training criteria, training methods, cadre rotation, and personnel planning are still rigid and lack gender sensitivity. Additionally, some targets for cadre planning and appointments are only guidelines rather than mandatory requirements, with no enforcement mechanisms in place. Delays in issuing policy implementation guidelines have also limited beneficiaries' ability to fully access their rights. As a result, female cadres face greater challenges than their male counterparts in meeting the requirements for promotion and appointment. Culturally, gender biases persist in society and among some officials and Party members, further hindering progress. These institutional and cultural barriers have significantly impacted efforts to achieve GE in politics and have made it more difficult for female cadres to gain leadership positions within Party committees in Vietnam.

Case studies were conducted in two provinces with a lower-than-average proportion of female cadres participating in Party Committees: Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong. In recent years, Party Committees in these two provinces have undertaken many practical activities to to promote female cadre development, particularly their participation in Party Committees. The efforts of Party Committees and key leaders in the two provinces are reflected primarily in the following aspects:

(1) Party Committees and leaders at all levels have promptly issued resolutions, directives, and action programs to translate central directives into concrete actions.
(2) Female cadre development has been integrated into the provinces' leadership and management cadre planning strategies, aligned with broader workforce development trends. Key initiatives include:
    - Identifying and nurturing female cadres with leadership potential for Party Committees and government positions at all levels.
    - Actively recruiting female cadres and fostering the development of female Party members.
    - Expanding the talent pool beyond Party and state administrative agencies to include public service units.
    - Preparing a reserve of female cadres exceeding the set targets to ensure regular and timely leadership succession. Some local Party Committees have implemented strict measures to improve the success rate of female cadres in planning, assigning them to key Party and government positions.
    - Regularly monitoring and strictly enforcing female cadre planning targets across all Party levels.

- Providing early and structured training for female cadres, integrating it into planning strategies, and ensuring timely deployment. Policies supporting female cadres in training programs have been effectively implemented.

(3) The Party Committees of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong have prioritized the rotation of female cadres to enhance their participation in Party Committees. Cadre rotation has been closely linked with planning processes, supported by policies ensuring favorable conditions for female cadres.

(4) VWU at various levels has begun playing an active role in Party development efforts, particularly in recommending female cadres for Party Committees.

(5) Most female cadres have demonstrated strong determination to balance family and professional responsibilities. Many have shown perseverance in overcoming challenges and effectively fulfilling their assigned duties.

Challenges in achieving targeted female representation: Despite significant efforts, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong has yet to meet the objectives set by Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW of the Politburo. Female representation remains uneven across localities in these provinces due to several key challenges:

(1) Some grassroots Party Committees and leaders have not been proactive or decisive in implementing measures to increase female representation. Female cadre development in certain units lacks concrete planning, and some Party Committees continue to approach it superficially.

(2) Gender stereotypes persist in various forms among some Party members and Party Committee members, both male and female. These biases are reflected in underestimating women's management and leadership capabilities, occupational segregation, and the perception that household responsibilities are women's duties.

(3) Some female cadres lack confidence and do not actively pursue leadership opportunities. Even among capable female cadres in sectors like education and healthcare, many prefer to remain in specialized roles rather than move into leadership positions.

(4) Many non-specialized cadres, including a significant number of women, have left their roles due to inadequate support, leading to a shortage of female cadre candidates for future leadership positions .

(5) Some localities and agencies responsible for cadre development struggle to identify and recruit potential female leaders, particularly outside their direct jurisdiction. As a result, when leadership opportunities arise, they often lack readily available female candidates for training, planning, rotation, and appointment.

Policy and practical recommendations

In the coming time, promoting GE and women's political participation will present many opportunities as well as challenges. The growing attention of the Party and the State to female cadre work will facilitate the enhancement of female cadres' participation in Party Committees.

The increasing proportion of female civil servants and Party members will provide a more abundant source of female cadres. However, in the context of organizational and structural reforms, the supplementation of the cadre workforce, including female cadres, will face difficulties.

Based on an analysis of Party directives, lessons learned, and the challenges faced by female cadres in Party Committees in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong provinces, the research team proposes a set of solutions. These include broad policy recommendations at the central level, as well as targeted strategies for Party Committees and local leaders to improve female representation in Party Committees in the coming years.

Improving policies and regulations at the central level

(1) Consider increasing the target percentage of women among Party Committee candidates at all levels and issuing more binding regulations on female cadre participation in Party Committees (not merely stating "strive for" or "encourage").

(2) Enhance inspection and supervision efforts to ensure compliance with Party resolutions and directives on female cadre work. Localities that fail to implement these regulations effectively should undergo assessment, with appropriate corrective actions or disciplinary measures applied.

(3) Implementing measures to promote GE is crucial for increasing female participation in Party Committees and ensuring substantive equality. It is essential to adjust policies related to female cadre development to create more favorable conditions for their involvement in leadership roles. For instance, flexible policies should be introduced for both young female cadres and those aged 40 and above regarding training and appointment age, training criteria, formats for professional and political theory training (full-time or part-time), cadre rotation methods and conditions, as well as support policies for balancing work and family responsibilities. In the current context of organizational restructuring, priority should be given to appointing female cadres as unit heads if they meet the same qualifications as male counterparts. Additionally, efforts should focus on improving policies for non-specialized personnel, many of whom are women, to build a strong pipeline of female cadres for future Party Committees.

(4) Establish a centralized data system to monitor female leadership development and track female participation in Party Committees. This system will enable proactive planning, timely inclusion of female cadres, and better comparison of participation rates across different localities.

(5) Enhance research efforts and organize workshops and conferences ocused on female participation in Party Committees. Given the limited research and the challenges in practical implementation, fostering knowledge exchange and evidence-based policymaking is crucial.

Some Solutions Related to Party Committees and Local Leaders

Based on in-depth research conducted in the two provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong, the research team proposes the following solutions related to the role of Party Committees and local leaders:

(1) Party Committees and leaders must rigorously implement the Party's directives to enhance the participation of female cadres in Party Committees, particularly in those with low female participation rates. Detailed and synchronized action plans must be developed across all stages of female cadre work, including training, capacity building, rotation, planning, and appointments. Higher-level Party Committees should strengthen inspections and oversight of the implementation of Party resolutions and directives on female cadres and evaluate the performance of subordinate organizations responsible for this work. Consider establishing a Task Force on Female Cadres, led by the Party Committee Secretary, to regularly review, draw lessons, and evaluate the Task Force's annual performance.

(2) Female cadre development should begin at the recruitment stage for civil servants, public employees, and Party members, ensuring that young female cadres have opportunities to hold key positions at the grassroots level. Efforts should focus on identifying potential female candidates early, particularly among high school and university students, with a strong emphasis on university students. Cadre planning must be regularly reviewed to maintain a continuous pipeline of qualified female cadres, ensuring timely appointments to new or vacant positions in Party Committees. In the short term, consideration should be given to reserving vacant Party Committee positions for female candidates until suitable individuals are identified.

(3) Cadre rotation should be recognized as a key strategy for increasing the number of female cadres in Party Committees. Female cadres should be assigned appropriate roles and rotated systematically to gain necessary experience. Provincial Party Committees should proactively propose pilot rotation and training solutions to the Central Committee, specifically designed for female cadres. These initiatives should incorporate flexible timelines and formats to ensure broader participation and effectiveness.

(4) Planning efforts should be closely aligned with appointments and cadre assignments, ensuring appropriate positions are identified so that female cadres can secure election to Party Committees during elections.

(5) Female cadres should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in their roles. Training and capacity-building programs should focus on professional expertise, organizational management, and strategic planning. Strengthening the quality of female cadres in Party Committees, as well as female leaders and managers, will contribute to long-term sustainable development. Additionally, female cadres should take an active role in enhancing their competencies to meet the demands of leadership positions.

(6) Special attention should be given to training and developing VWU leaders who are in the leadership pipeline but do not yet meet the criteria for Party Committees. This will help build a strong pool of local female Party Committee members. Women's Unions at all levels should

continue playing a key role in Party development by identifying and recommending high-potential female cadres to local Party Committees.

(7) Continue strengthening communication efforts to raise awareness among cadres and Party members about the importance of female cadre work and women's participation in Party Committees. These efforts should be tailored to different target groups, including Party Committees, male cadres, and potential female leaders. Regular dissemination of the Party's regulations on female cadre work should utilize diverse communication methods, focusing on changing gender stereotypes about women's leadership capabilities, addressing self-doubt among female cadres while encouraging their ambition and effort, and promoting greater family support for women in politics. Women's Unions at all levels should lead communication campaigns to showcase and widely share successful models of families that actively support women in Party Committees and leadership roles.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

GE, particularly in the political sphere, plays a crucial role in driving societal development. Increasing women's participation in politics ensures balanced representation in decision-making, enabling more inclusive solutions to societal challenges while addressing the diverse needs and interests of all genders. Moreover, equal political participation enhances the mobilization and effective utilization of resources, contributing to sustainable and comprehensive development.

Recognizing the importance of GE, particularly in politics, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) views it as both a fundamental goal and a driving force for the country's sustainable development. The Politburo's Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW (2007) on women's affairs in the context of industrialization and modernization, Directive No. 21-CT/TW (2018) on strengthening women's affairs, and various Party Congress documents have consistently emphasized the need to increase women's participation in politics. To institutionalize these directives, the 2013 Constitution, the 2006 GE Law, and the 2015 Law on the Election of National Assembly and People's Council Deputies, among others, have introduced policies aimed at ensuring a higher proportion of women in political leadership, reflecting their evolving role and contributions in Vietnamese society.

Enhancing women's role in politics and increasing their representation in Party Committees is essential, as the CPV maintains unified leadership over cadre work, and Party Committees serve as the leading bodies of grassroots Party organizations between congresses. The inclusion of female cadres in Party Committees is a crucial step toward fostering gender-responsive leadership, ultimately contributing to the broader advancement of women's status in society.

In recent years, the CPV has introduced various resolutions and directives to promote female participation in Party Committees. Before each Party Congress, the Central Committee issues specific guidelines to ensure appropriate female representation within Party Committees. Thanks to the proactive efforts of Party Committees at all levels, the proportion of women in these leadership bodies has steadily increased, particularly at the local level (provincial, district, and commune). For example, in the 2020-2025 term, female representation in provincial Party Committees reached 16%, a two-percentage-point increase from the previous term. At the district level, the proportion rose to 20.1%, up by 1.9 percentage points. Additionally, the number of female cadres in the Standing Committees of Party Committees has also seen an upward trend (Central Organization Commission, VWU, 2020).

However, in comparison to the targets established by Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW of the Politburo on female cadre development—targets that were institutionalized through the National Strategy on GE 2011–2020—the objective of ensuring that 25% of Party Committee members were women

by 2020 was not achieved. Furthermore, the proportion of female participation in Party Committees varies across localities. For instance, the percentage of women in Party Committees and Standing Committees in the provinces of the Southeast region is significantly higher than in other regions. Conversely, the representation of women in Party Committees and Standing Committees in the North Central and Central Coastal regions, as well as the Central Highlands, remains lower than the national average.

Given this context, it is crucial to examine the participation of female cadres in Party Committees across regions with both above-average and below-average representation to extract generalizable lessons. To date, this issue has not been thoroughly analyzed, as most existing studies focus on women's political participation more broadly, without specifically addressing the role of female cadres in Party Committees. Identifying the factors constraining women's participation in Party Committees from institutional, cultural, and individual perspectives is essential to establishing a scientific foundation for developing evidence-based solutions aimed at increasing female representation in Party Committees at all levels in future terms.

In June and July 2024, HCMA, in collaboration with the Vietnam Sociological Association, conducted surveys in two provinces of the Southeast region, Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc, on this subject (HCMA et al., 2024). These provinces exhibit a relatively high proportion of female cadres in Party Committees compared to the national average. The research findings from these localities offer valuable insights into strategies for enhancing female participation in Party Committees. The analysis of female cadres' involvement in Party Committees within specific areas of these provinces has highlighted the influence of various factors on their participation and underscored the diverse measures that can be implemented to improve female representation. Furthermore, the study suggests that socio-economic resources alone do not fully determine female participation in Party Committees; rather, the proactive efforts of local Party Committees play a crucial role in facilitating greater female representation.

This context highlights the necessity of analyzing the actual participation of female cadres in Party Committees in localities with lower representation rates. Thua Thien Hue Province (which is scheduled to be renamed Hue City on January 1, 2025, following the Resolution of the 8th Session of the 15th National Assembly; however, as the survey was conducted in November 2024, this report retains the province’s original name) and Lam Dong Province are appropriate sites for such a study. Thua Thien Hue is situated in the North Central region, while Lam Dong is located in the Central Highlands.

Preliminary statistical data indicate that the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees in these provinces remains lower than the national average. In Thua Thien Hue, at the commencement of the 2020–2025 term, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees was 14.9% at the provincial level, 15.2% at the district level, and 20.4% at the commune level.

The corresponding figures for Lam Dong were 13.2%, 17%, and 22%, respectively. By contrast, the national averages for these levels were 16%, 20%, and 25%.

Thua Thien Hue, as the former imperial capital, has maintained a strong commitment to traditional cultural values, which may contribute to the persistence of conventional gender perceptions. Meanwhile, Lam Dong, characterized by a substantial ethnic minority population (ethnic minorities constitute over 40% of the total population), may exhibit limited perceptions of women's roles in politics. Conducting an in-depth investigation in these two localities could provide critical insights into the factors influencing the participation of female cadres in Party Committees and inform policies aimed at enhancing their representation.

1.2. Research objectives and methods

1.2.1. Research objectives

The research aims to propose solutions to leaders at various levels to enhance opportunities for female cadres to participate in Party Committees at the provincial, district, and commune levels in general, and specifically in the two provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong.

Specific objectives:

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of policies, laws, guidelines, and the implementation of policies related to the participation of female cadres in Party Committees at all three administrative levels to identify opportunities and challenges in enhancing women's political representation.
- Assess the current status of female cadres' participation in Party Committees at the provincial, district, and commune levels in the provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong.
- Examine both successful and unsuccessful experiences in female cadres' participation in Party Committees at the provincial, district, and commune levels in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong, where the proportion of female representation remains below the national average.
- Identify key factors influencing female cadres' participation in Party Committees at the provincial, district, and commune levels in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong.
- Develop policy recommendations to enhance opportunities for female cadres to participate in Party Committees at all three administrative levels nationwide, with a particular focus on the upcoming Party Committee planning for the 2025-2030 term and the 14th Party Congress, as well as tailored recommendations for Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong.

1.2.2. Research methods

- **Analysis of Party Documents and Policies**: Review Party documents and policies concerning the increase in female representation within Party Committees at all levels. Examine relevant guidelines and directives issued by the Party Committees of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong.

- **Survey Implementation**: Conduct field surveys and discussions with provincial leaders from various departments and agencies. Surveys include:
- **Thua Thien Hue**: Fieldwork in Hue City (Phu Thuong and Thuan Loc wards), Huong Thuy Town (Thuy Duong Ward and Thuy Thanh Commune).
- **Lam Dong**: Fieldwork in Da Lat City (Wards 7 and 9), Lac Duong District (Da Nhim and Da Sar communes). Survey details are provided in the Appendix.
- **Scientific workshops**: Conduct two provincial-level scientific workshops to collect expert feedback on research findings, serving as a foundation for policy advisory reports aimed at enhancing women's representation in Party Committees.
- **Discussion sessions:** Organize seven discussion sessions per province to gather stakeholder input on female participation in Party Committees. These include one forum at the provincial level, two at the district level, and four at the commune level.
- **Qualitative data collection**: Conduct in-depth interviews with 12 cadres per province across three administrative levels to examine factors influencing female cadres' opportunities to join Party Committees
- **Online surveys**: Administer online surveys targeting 1,000 Party members in Thua Thien Hue and 1,000 in Lam Dong. Participants are selected from various levels within the political system, ensuring a broad representation. The survey covers key aspects such as demographic and socio-economic characteristics, current job roles, participation in Party Committees, perceived advantages and challenges, and attitudes toward female representation. Due to time constraints, online questionnaires were deemed appropriate; however, given their inherent limitations in length and depth, qualitative interviews were conducted to complement the findings.

The survey achieved gender balance between male and female respondents, though the proportion of Party members under 30 years old was lower than that of older age groups. The majority of respondents belonged to the Kinh ethnic group and held university degrees or higher. Party members were distributed evenly across various sectors and administrative levels, with approximately one-third lacking formal political theory training. The proportion of provincial-level Party members was higher in Lam Dong than in Thua Thien Hue. Overall, the survey sample reflects the diversity of Party members and provides a representative assessment of their perspectives on female participation in Party Committees across the two provinces.

Table 1: Characteristics of the online research sample of Party members in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong provinces

(Unit: %)

Characteristics		Thua Thien Hue (N=1000)	Lam Dong (N=1000)	Both provinces combined
Age	Under 30	22,6	5,7	14,2
	From 30 to under 40	26,2	36,8	31,5
	From 40 to under 50	25,3	34,2	29,8
	50 and above	25,9	23,3	24,6
Gender	Male	54,0	54,3	54,2
	Female	46,0	45,7	45,9
Ethnicity	Kinh	96,5	83,6	90,0
	Ethnic minorities	3,5	16,4	10,0
Educational Level	College or below	19,4	12,3	15,9
	University	69,2	66,7	68,0
	Postgraduate	11,4	21,0	16,2
Political Theory Level	No formal training	33,9	32,1	33,0
	Intermediate	27,8	23,1	25,5
	Middle Level	28,5	30,4	29,5
	Advanced	9,8	14,4	12,1
Work Sector	Party	35,0	24,0	29,5
	State Administration	28,4	50,5	39,5
	Mass Organizations	36,6	25,5	31,1
Work level	Commune level	49,2	21,1	35,2
	District level	25,4	32,8	29,1
	Province level	25,4	46,1	35,8

The discussion contributions of delegates participating in the provincial-level workshops included representatives from provincial, district, and commune levels. Following reports from commune, district, and provincial units on cadre work, the participation of female cadres in Party Committees, existing policies, and future orientations, delegates raised questions regarding key issues related to female cadre development.

Survey activities in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong provinces were conducted in November and December 2024.

CHAPTER II: THE PARTY'S PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES IN ENHANCING FEMALE CADRES' PARTICIPATION IN PARTY COMMITTEES

2.1. The Party's perspective

On April 27, 2007, the Politburo issued Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW, outlining its stance on female cadre development amid the acceleration of industrialization and modernization. The resolution states: "Building and sustainably developing a team of female cadres commensurate with the significant role of women is an objective requirement and an important component of the Party's cadre strategy." This underscores the Party and State's commitment to GE and the advancement of Vietnamese women.

Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW establishes key directives for the planning, training, and utilization of female cadres:

- Integrate female cadre planning into the Party's overall cadre planning at all levels, sectors, and localities.
- Prioritize the training and development of female cadres to proactively cultivate human resources.
- Ensure GE in age criteria for cadre planning, training, promotion, and appointment.
- Set specific targets for female cadre development, aiming for women to constitute at least 25% of Party Committee members by 2020.

With the active implementation of the Politburo's Resolution, initial targets for female cadre participation in Party Committees have been met. The appointment of female cadres to leadership positions within Party Committees has increased. Data from the Central Organization Committee and VWU Party Delegation indicate a rise in the number of women serving as Central Party Secretaries, Central Committee members (including alternate members), and members of provincial, city, and grassroots Party Committees during the 2006–2010 term compared to the previous term (VWU Party Delegation, 2009).Following Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW, the Party issued many directives to achieve the targets for female cadres' participation in Party Committees. Below are some key documents directly related to female cadre work in Party Committees:

(1) Conclusion No. 55-KL/TW, issued by the Secretariat on January 18, 2013, underscores the need to advance the implementation of Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW. The Secretariat emphasizes institutionalizing the resolution's provisions, enhancing inspection and oversight to facilitate women's development, and ensuring the principle of GE in age requirements for planning, training, promotion, appointment, and retirement. Additionally, the conclusion instructs the Central Organization Committee to guide the implementation of policies on female cadre development, enabling Party Committees, departments, agencies, and localities to formulate female cadre planning strategies. It reaffirms the objective of attaining a minimum of 25% female representation in Party Committees at all levels by 2020.

(2) Notification No. 196-TB/TW, dated March 16, 2015, by the Secretariat on the Proposal "Strengthening the Party's Leadership on GE and Women's Advancement in the New Context." This notification emphasizes that Party Committees and Party organizations must

excel in personnel arrangements for Party congresses at all levels, in the spirit of ensuring "female Party Committee members account for no less than 15%, and there must be female cadres in the Standing Committees of Party Committees."

(3) Directive No. 21-CT/TW, dated January 20, 2018, issued by the Secretariat on Further Strengthening Women's Affairs in the New Context. This Directive emphasizes the pivotal role of heads of Party Committees and government authorities at all levels in directing and systematically implementing measures to achieve the targets set by Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW on female cadre development. It underscores the importance of fostering a pipeline of young female cadres and female cadres from ethnic minority groups. Additionally, it calls for the refinement of regulations on cadre management to ensure GE in age criteria for planning, training, appointment, and rotation, particularly for women in leadership and managerial positions, in accordance with each developmental stage.

Furthermore, the Directive reiterates the responsibility of VWU at all levels to actively uphold its core role in women's affairs and contribute to the development of a robust female cadre within the political system.

(4) Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW, dated May 19, 2018, adopted at the Seventh Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee, addresses "Strengthening the development of cadres at all levels, particularly at the strategic level, with adequate competence, capacity, and prestige to fulfill task requirements." The resolution reiterates the necessity of ensuring female representation in the Standing Committees of Party Committees and Party organizations at all levels and mandates that the proportion of female Party Committee members at all levels attain 20–25%.

(5) Directive No. 35-CT/TW, dated May 30, 2019, issued by the Politburo on "Party Congresses at all levels towards the 13th National Party Congress," establishes the composition and proportion of female Party Committee members and delineates the responsibilities of Party Committee leaders at all levels. The directive underscores the obligation of Party Committees, particularly their leadership, to proactively and conscientiously oversee the review, evaluation, training, development, and appointment of female cadres to structured positions within the new Party Committees. It further mandates the implementation of effective measures to ensure an adequate cadre pool for both immediate and long-term needs. Moreover, the Standing Committees of subordinate Party Committees are required to report to the Standing Committees of superior Party Committees regarding the preparation of documents and personnel plans. Party congresses may only proceed upon obtaining approval from higher authorities.

However, this directive sets a lower target for female representation compared to the provisions of Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW and Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW (2018), establishing a minimum threshold of 15% female Party Committee members while ensuring female representation in the Standing Committees.

(6) Directive No. 46-CT/TW dated July 28, 2020, by the Secretariat on the leadership of women's congresses at all levels and the 13th National Women's Congress for the 2022–2027 term. This directive emphasizes the core role of the Women's Union in introducing female cadre resources to the Party and the State.
(7) On June 14, 2024, the Politburo issued Directive No. 35-CT/TW regarding Party congresses at all levels in preparation for the 14th National Party Congress. This directive reaffirmed the target of at least 15% female representation in Party Committees, with a minimum of one female cadre in the Standing Committee. Additionally, the age criteria for both reappointment and initial participation in Party Committees remained unchanged from previous terms. Consequently, female cadres continue to face structural barriers to Party Committee membership due to retirement age policies, which have remained largely unaltered since the enactment of the 2019 Labor Code.

Over the years, the Party has issued multiple directives aimed at enhancing female participation in Party Committees, accompanied by specific guidelines and localized implementation efforts. However, as evidenced in the aforementioned directives, these targets remain largely aspirational, lacking binding mandates and robust evaluation mechanisms. Notably, since the issuance of Resolution No. 11 in 2007, the prescribed target for female representation in Party Committees has been progressively lowered in comparison to the initial objectives.

2.2. Results of enhancing female cadres' participation in Party Committees

Despite significant efforts by the Party and the State to implement resolutions on GE in politics, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees has not met the prescribed targets. As of June 2024, data from HCMA (2024) indicate that female representation in Party Committees stood at 16% at the provincial level, 20% at the district level, and 25% at the commune level (rounded figures). These figures remain below the 25% target set for 2020 under Resolution No. 11/TW. Variations in female cadre participation across Party Committees are influenced by factors such as socio-economic conditions, the extent of resolution implementation, and local cultural characteristics.

2.2.1 Nationwide overview

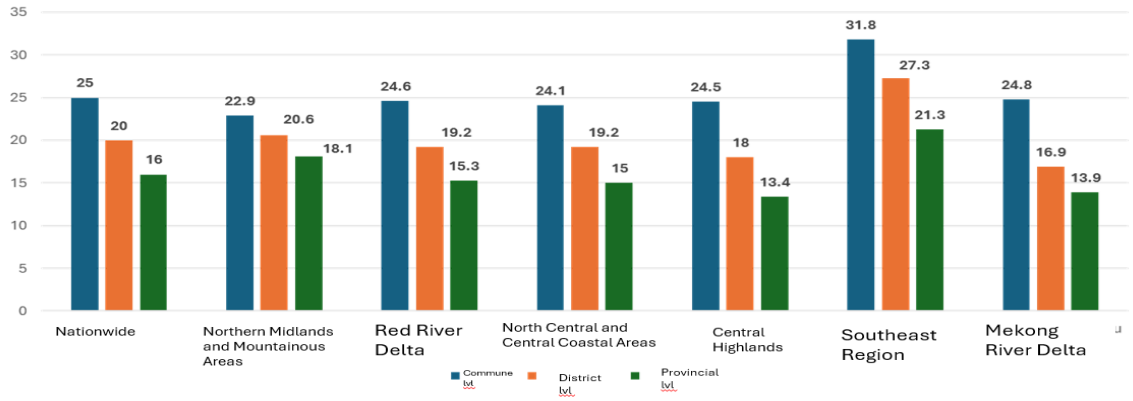
As of June 2024 (see Figure 1), the representation of female cadres in Party Committees at all administrative levels varies across localities. The Southeast region has the highest proportions, with 31.8% at the commune level, 27.3% at the district level, and 21.3% at the provincial level. Conversely, the lowest proportions are observed in the Northern Midlands and Mountainous region at the commune level (22.9%), the Mekong Delta at the district level (16.9%), and the Central Highlands at the provincial level (13.4%).

A detailed analysis reveals further regional disparities. At the commune level, Binh Duong records the highest proportion of female cadres (38.1%), followed by Hai Phong (36.3%), while Dak Nong registers the lowest (8.8%). At the district level, the highest representation is in Lang Son (30%), followed by Ninh Binh (28%), Binh Duong (27.2%), and Ho Chi Minh City (27.3%), whereas Bac

Giang reports the lowest proportion (11.6%). At the provincial level, Tuyen Quang has the highest proportion (29.2%), followed by Binh Phuoc (28.3%), while Quang Binh reports the lowest (8.2%).

Figure 1. Percentage of females participating in provincial, district, and communal Party Committees in 2024

Unit: %



Source: Data compiled by HCMA, June 2024

The following analysis examines the participation of female cadres in Party Committees at various levels. This assessment is based on evaluations conducted by the Central Organization Committee and VWU following the completion of local Party Committee elections in 2020, in preparation for the 13th National Party Congress.[1]

Participation of female cadres in grassroots Party Committees

The proportion of female members in the executive boards of grassroots Party Committees (including communes, wards, and townships) across the 63 provinces and cities stands at 25.6%, representing an increase of 4.2 percentage points compared to the end of the previous term. Ten provinces and cities have achieved a representation rate of 30% or higher, while no province or city reports a rate below 15%. Nationally, 81.5% of grassroots units have a female representation rate of at least 15% within their Party Committees.

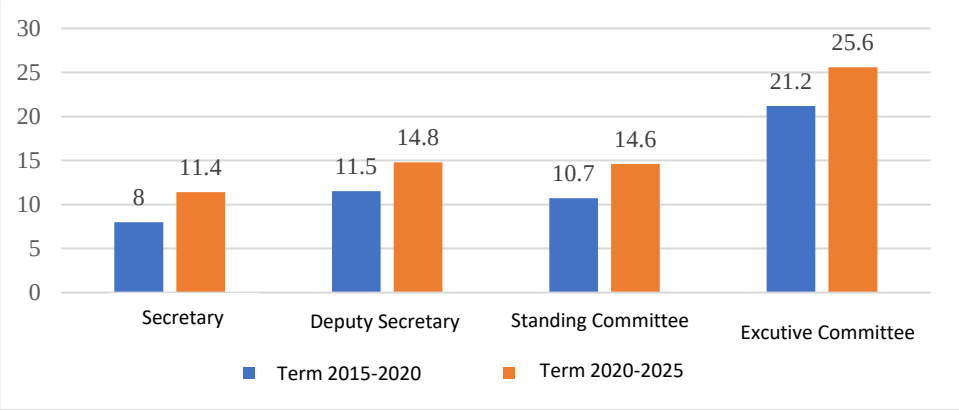
The proportion of women serving on the standing committees of grassroots Party Committees is 14.6%, reflecting a 3.9 percentage-point increase from the previous term. Ten provinces and cities have attained a rate of 20% or higher. The percentage of grassroots units with female members in standing committees has reached 48.5%, marking an increase of 2.7 percentage points compared to the previous term.

Regarding leadership positions, the proportion of women holding secretary positions nationwide is 11.4%, rising from 8% in the previous term. Similarly, the proportion of female deputy secretaries has increased to 14.8%, up from 11.5% in the previous term.

[1] The data below was compiled at a different time from the information collected by HCMA, so some information may not align due to staff rotations.

Figure 2. Percentage of female officials nationwide participating in grassroots Party Committees (Executive Committees and Standing Committees)

Unit: %



Source: https://phunuvietnam.vn/ty-le-can-bo-nu-trong-3-cap-uy-dang-nhiem-ky-2020-2025-20201112154535608.htm

Women under the age of 40 constitute 36.6% of all Party Committee members in this age group and 57.7% of all female Party Committee members. The educational and political theoretical qualifications of female Party Committee members have improved significantly. The proportion of female members holding a university degree or higher has risen to 85.8%, compared to 61.4% in the previous term. Additionally, 91% of female Party Committee members possess intermediate or higher-level political theory qualifications, an increase from 76.8% in the previous term.

Participation of Female Cadres in District Party Committees

The proportion of female Party Committee members at the district level—including districts, towns, provincially governed cities, and townships—across all 63 provinces and centrally administered cities stands at 20.1%, reflecting an increase of 1.9 percentage points compared to the end of the previous term. Nationally, 79.2% of districts reported a female Party Committee membership rate of at least 15%, marking an improvement over the previous term. Notably, in 12 provinces and centrally administered cities, all districts achieved this threshold.

The proportion of women serving on the standing committees of district-level Party Committees is 15.3%, representing a 3.4 percentage point increase from the previous term. Additionally, 92.8% of districts reported the presence of female cadres in their standing committees, an increase of 8.5 percentage points from the preceding term. The proportion of female Party secretaries at the district level has risen to 9.7%, up from 7.4% in the previous term, while the proportion of female deputy secretaries has increased to 9.4%, compared to 5.9% in the previous term.

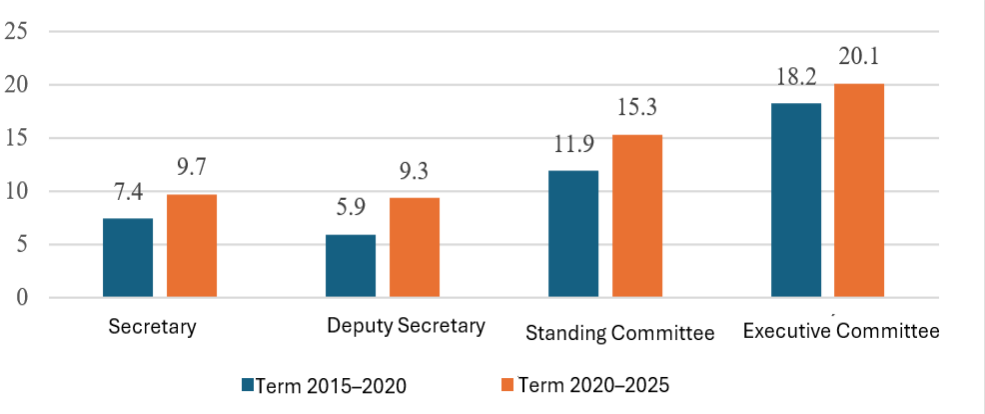
Regarding age demographics, women constituted 34.2% of all Party Committee members under 40 years old and 27.7% of the total female Party Committee membership. In terms of

educational qualifications, 99.7% of female Party Committee members hold a university degree or higher, up from 97.8% in the previous term. Additionally, 90.2% have attained advanced political theory or bachelor-level political theory qualifications, an increase from 76.5% in the previous term.

Among the 696 districts nationwide, 650 reported the inclusion of Women's Union officials within their Party Committees, representing 93.4%.

Figure 3. Percentage of female officials nationwide participating in district-level Party Committees (Executive Committees and Standing Committees)

Unit: %



Source: https://phunuvietnam.vn/ty-le-can-bo-nu-trong-3-cap-uy-dang-nhiem-ky-2020-2025-20201112154535608.htm

Participation of female cadres in provincial Party Committees

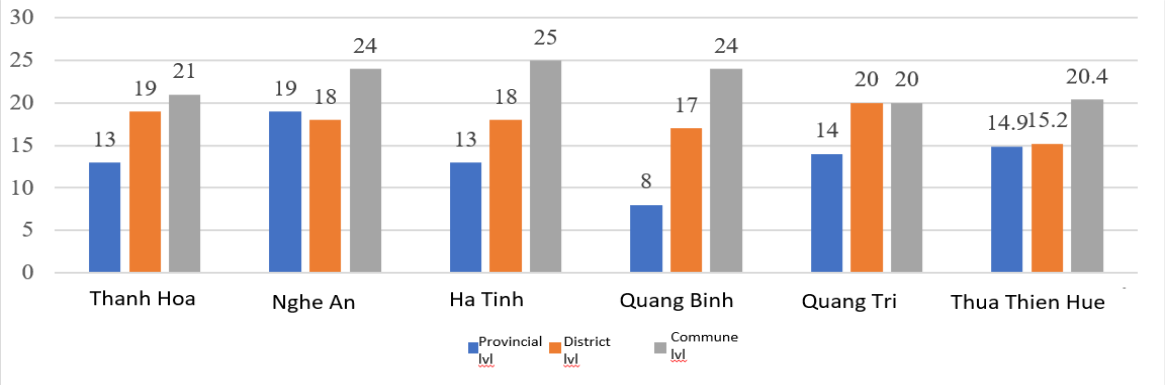
The average proportion of female Party Committee members across 63 provincial and city Party Committees is 16% (an increase of 2 percentage points compared to the end of the previous term). A total of 35 provinces has a female Party Committee member proportion of 15% or higher (an increase of 5 provinces compared to the previous term), with Tuyen Quang having the highest rate at 29.2%. However, 28 provinces have a proportion below 15%, with some provinces falling below 10%, including Quang Binh, Can Tho, and Long An. Of the 63 provinces and cities, 61 have female cadres in their standing committees. Nationwide, there are 9 female Party Secretaries and 14 female Deputy Secretaries, with Binh Phuoc notably having two female Deputy Secretaries. Additionally, 59 out of 63 provinces have the President or Vice President of the provincial Women's Union elected to the Executive Committee of the provincial Party Committee.

2.2.2. The North Central and Central Highlands Regions

Based on data collected by HCMA in 2024 through provincial reports, the proportion of female cadres participating in Party Committees at all levels in the North Central and Central Highlands regions is presented in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4. Percentage of females participating in provincial, district, and communal Party Committees in 2024 in the North Central Region

Unit: %

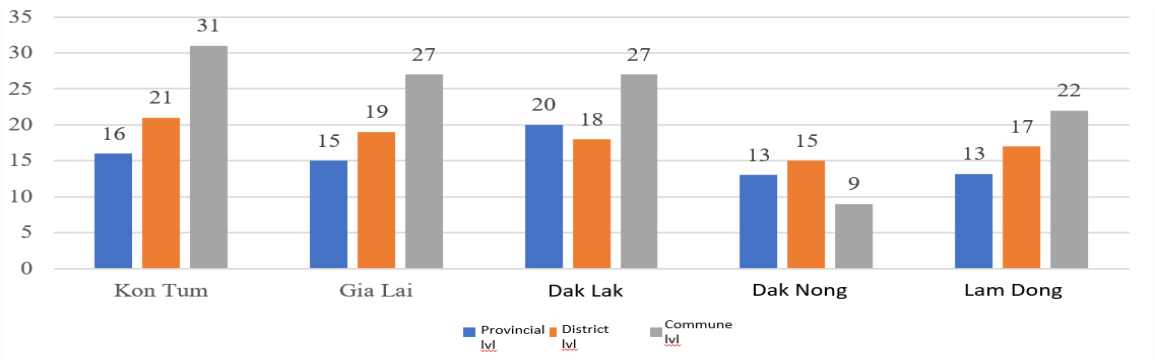


Source: Data compiled by HCMA, June 2024

As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees at all three levels in the North Central region varies and is inconsistent across levels. The overall proportion is relatively higher in Nghe An but comparatively lower in other provinces.

Figure 5. Percentage of females participating in provincial, district, and communal Party Committees in the Central Highlands in 2024

Unit: %



Source: Data compiled by HCMA, June 2024

The data in Figure 5 shows that only Kon Tum has a proportion of female participation in Party Committees at all three levels higher than the national average. In Dak Lak, the provincial and commune levels have higher proportions than the national average, but the district level is lower. Meanwhile, Gia Lai has a higher proportion of female participation at the commune level but lower proportions at the district and provincial levels. The other two provinces have female participation rates at all three levels below the national average.

2.3. General influencing factors

The proportion of female cadres participating in Party Committees is influenced by various factors,

such as socio-economic development, human resources, legal and policy frameworks, and their implementation, as well as gender stereotypes. Below is an overview of these factors.

Socio-economic development

Over the past decade, Vietnam has experienced substantial economic growth. In 2022, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 8.02% compared to 2021, marking the highest growth rate in the last decade. The per capita GDP at current prices reached VND 95.6 million (approximately USD 4,110), reflecting an increase of USD 393 from the previous year. In 2024, Vietnam's economic growth rate was recorded at 7.09% compared to 2023,[2] exceeding the target set by the National Assembly (approximately 6%–6.5%).[3] Economic advancements have enhanced financial and human resources, facilitating the implementation of GE policies. Socio-economic development programs have contributed to improving the overall quality of life, particularly for women, enabling them to allocate more time and effort to political and social activities. Moreover, economic growth has expanded employment opportunities, allowing women to participate more actively in the labor force and attain higher social and familial status. Additionally, increased economic resources have enabled local governments to provide material support for female cadres in training, capacity-building initiatives, and professional rotations.

Human resource development

The development of human resources to meet the demands of high-quality labor, as required by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration, has been a strategic priority for the Party and the State of Vietnam. According to the 2021 national education rankings, published in 2022, Vietnam ranked 59th globally, an improvement of five places compared to 2020. Additionally, the country ranked 38th out of 174 economies on the Human Capital Index. Over recent years, the educational gap between men and women has significantly narrowed (National Steering Committee for Population and Housing Census, 2010; 2019). Advancements in education have contributed to shifting societal perceptions of gender roles, particularly regarding women's participation in political activities, fostering more favorable conditions for their involvement

Despite these advancements, gender disparities persist in the education sector. While female students outnumber their male counterparts at the university and college levels, gender stereotypes continue to influence academic and career choices. Males predominantly pursue disciplines such as engineering, machinery, construction, and services, whereas females are more concentrated in social sciences, education, arts, and humanities (Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, UNFPA, 2020). This occupational segregation has resulted in challenges in identifying female candidates for leadership positions in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as

[2] https://baochinhphu.vn/nen-kinh-te-phuc-hoi-tich-cuc-voi-muc-tang-gdp-uoc-dat-709-10225010609545 5418.htm

[3] https://kinhtevadubao.vn/kinh-te-viet-nam-giai-doan-2020-2023-va-du-bao-nam-2024-28160.html

economics and technology. The limited presence of female professionals in these sectors further constrains their participation in leadership roles. This challenge is particularly evident in provinces such as Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc, where appointing female officials to leadership positions in economic management, urban planning, and transportation has proven difficult due to the scarcity of qualified female candidates in these fields.

Vietnam's female labor force participation rate is relatively high. Between 2009 and 2019, over 71% of women aged 15 and older were engaged in the labor market. However, this figure declined to 63.1% in 2023 (General Statistics Office, 2015, 2018, 2024). Women's substantial presence in the workforce has contributed to their socio-economic status; however, traditional gender roles persist, placing women under a "double burden" of professional and domestic responsibilities, which hampers their political engagement. Additionally, disparities in labor quality between men and women remain evident. In 2023, the proportion of women receiving formal vocational training was 23.7%, compared to 30.1% for men (General Statistics Office, 2024). This gap presents significant challenges for female workers in an increasingly technology-driven environment, thereby restricting their professional advancement and political participation.

Income disparity between male and female workers is another pressing issue. In 2023, the average monthly income of female workers was 13.9% lower than that of their male counterparts (General Statistics Office, 2024). This wage gap reinforces traditional gender-based labor divisions, wherein women are often expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities while men assume greater access to economic opportunities. Addressing these systemic inequalities is crucial for fostering gender equity in education, labor force participation, and political representation.

Legal provisions, policies, and implementation measures

As previously outlined, the CPV has issued multiple resolutions and directives on the development and promotion of female officials, particularly regarding their increased participation in Party executive committees at various levels. Local governments have rigorously implemented policies on female cadre development in accordance with central directives. Party committees at all levels have prioritized this effort, creating favorable conditions for the planning, training, capacity-building, and rotation of female officials to ensure gender balance in leadership structures.

However, certain Party directives lack consistency and coherence regarding the targets for cadre work. For instance, the targets specified in Resolution No. 11/NQ-TW of 2007 and subsequent documents such as Guideline No. 15-HD/BTCTW dated November 5, 2012, Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW dated May 19, 2018, and Directive No. 35-CT/TW dated February 30, 2019, are not entirely consistent.

However, inconsistencies remain in certain Party directives concerning specific targets for female cadre development. For instance, the objectives outlined in Resolution No. 11/NQ-TW (2007) and subsequent documents, such as Guidance No. 15-HD/BTCTW dated November 5, 2012; Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW dated May 19, 2018; and Directive No. 35-CT/TW dated February 30, 2019, lack uniformity and coherence.

Some policies on cadre management have yet to fully facilitate women's access to professional

training and leadership opportunities. Existing regulations on training criteria, training formats, cadre rotation mechanisms, and cadre planning remain inflexible and insufficiently gender sensitive. For example, young female officials often face challenges in attending full-time training programs in political and professional theory. According to Regulation No. 57-QĐ/TW, dated February 8, 2022, female officials must be at least 33 years old to enroll in the Intermediate Political Theory program, while men must be 35 or older. Similarly, for the Advanced Political Theory program, the minimum age is 38 for women and 40 for men. While this age differentiation appears to accommodate women, it inadvertently disadvantages them, as those under 33 and 38 are often in their childbearing and early childcare years, limiting their ability to participate in training. In provinces such as Binh Phuoc and Binh Duong, many female officials have had to postpone their political studies to care for young children, thereby missing training opportunities and failing to meet the necessary political qualifications for promotion.

Certain central regulations on cadre planning and appointments remain advisory rather than mandatory, with no enforcement mechanisms. Consequently, despite existing guidelines, some local Party committees that fail to meet the required female cadre ratios do not face consequences, nor do their higher-level Party committees prioritize corrective action. As a result, some localities continue to lack female representation in Party executive boards. For instance, although Binh Phuoc has a relatively high overall proportion of female officials in Party committees, some communes still have no female representation at the executive level.

The regulations on leadership and management cadre planning lack a long-term framework to ensure a sustainable proportion of female officials in leadership positions. A persistent gap exists between regulatory requirements and actual implementation in the planning, training, and promotion of female officials. Before the 13th Party Congress, Guidance No. 15-HD/BTCTW (2012) and Guidance No. 06-HD/BTCTW (2017) set a minimum target of 15% female representation in executive committees and standing committees at all levels. After the 13th Party Congress, Regulation No. 50-QĐ/TW, dated December 27, 2021, raised this target to at least 25%. However, this goal has not yet been met at the provincial level. Additionally, age criteria for cadre planning and appointments remain tied to retirement age, which disproportionately affects female officials, as their retirement age is generally lower than that of men. Directive No. 35-CT/TW (2024) further introduced regulations on the tenure of officials nominated for higher positions. Specifically, those recommended for election to Party executive committees or leadership positions within Party committees, government bodies, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and socio-political organizations must have held their current or an equivalent position for at least two years (24 months), with exceptions requiring a minimum of one year (12 months), subject to the discretion of the appointing authority. Given the currently low proportion of female officials in Party committees, this requirement may create additional barriers to increasing female representation in leadership positions.

Training and capacity-building are critical to ensuring a sustainable pipeline of female officials. Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW (2007) mandates that at least 30% of participants in political and public

administration training programs be women. However, a 10-year review of its implementation found that this target has not been met in practice.

There are no specific regulations on the proportion of female leadership and management cadres subject to rotation. Regulation No. 65-QĐ/TW (2022) on cadre rotation emphasizes tenure requirements, stating that officials must have at least 10 years of service remaining at the time of rotation, with exceptions subject to higher-level authorities' discretion. Given the existing disparities in retirement age, female officials face additional challenges in accessing rotation opportunities. Age-related restrictions on cadre rotation and appointments may hinder many women from obtaining essential training, planning, and promotion opportunities. This is particularly concerning as female officials aged 40 and above have accumulated substantial professional expertise and leadership experience, while their family responsibilities tend to decrease.

Non-specialist officials at the commune level currently constitute an important cadre resource in many localities. However, limited policies and benefits for these officials deter long-term service in local government. Field research in Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc indicates that a significant number of women hold non-specialist positions. Amid ongoing government restructuring efforts, transitioning these officials into civil service roles presents significant challenges, potentially restricting the future pipeline of female officials for Party executive committees.

Some policy implementation guidelines have not been issued in a timely manner, failing to safeguard the rights of intended beneficiaries. For example, under Decree No. 48/2009/NĐ-CP, the Government assigned the Ministry of Home Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and other relevant ministries, to develop implementation guidelines for supporting female officials, civil servants, and public employees undergoing training while caring for children under 36 months old. However, as of 2023, the Ministry of Home Affairs had not yet issued these guidelines. Consequently, most local governments, when formulating policies on training support for officials, did not include provisions for this support (Phùng Thị An Na, 2020). The availability of such assistance has thus depended on local economic conditions. In resource-constrained areas, this omission has posed challenges for female officials seeking professional development, reducing their motivation and limiting career advancement opportunities, as training periods often coincide with childbearing and childcare responsibilities.

The implementation of central-level resolutions and directives at the local level is crucial for advancing female leadership in the public sector. Practical experience from Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc demonstrates that while financial resources are important, they are not the sole determinant of female participation in Party executive committees. Some localities with less developed economies have achieved higher female representation, whereas wealthier localities have lower participation rates. The decisive factor is the commitment of local Party committees and their leadership. In areas where Party leaders actively prioritize female cadre development, innovative strategies have been employed to effectively implement central policies and enhance

female representation. Proactively identifying and planning for female officials from recruitment and Party membership stages is crucial. Additionally, regularly reviewing and selecting outstanding female officials with leadership potential for management training and ensuring robust female representation at the commune level are effective measures for strengthening the female cadre pipeline.

Lessons from Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc highlight the importance of integrating training and cadre planning, exceeding central targets in both quantity and quality to ensure the timely appointment of female officials when needed. Gender mainstreaming in cadre rotation, maintaining comprehensive records on female officials, and actively identifying female leadership potential within institutions have proven effective in increasing female participation in Party executive committees.

Ensuring competency-based appointments for female officials fosters public confidence in their leadership capabilities, thereby shifting societal perceptions of women's leadership roles and expanding their participation in governance.

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded in society (Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs et al., 2021), reinforcing the perception that men inherently possess power and managerial competence. This bias contributes to attitudes that hinder women's advancement into leadership positions. Consequently, female leaders and managers are subjected to heightened scrutiny and more severe judgment compared to their male counterparts. Even in provinces with relatively high female representation in Party Committees, such as Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc, officials have observed that women are frequently criticized for prioritizing family responsibilities. Additionally, they face harsher evaluations than men for errors in leadership and management. Both men and, in some cases, women exhibit a preference for male leadership, further obstructing women's political careers and creating systemic barriers from the initial stages of personnel selection.

These gender stereotypes also manifest among female cadres themselves, fostering self-doubt and diminished ambition. Some female cadres cite family obligations as a justification for not dedicating time to professional training or cadre rotation programs. Others, despite possessing the requisite competence, opt to focus solely on their professional duties, displaying reluctance to engage in political activities. Empirical evidence from Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc suggests that implementing targeted and resolute measures to enhance awareness of gender issues—both within organizational structures and through public communication campaigns—plays a pivotal role in mitigating gender bias. A diversified approach to communication, including thematic workshops on GE, female cadre club activities, and media outreach, has proven effective in fostering greater awareness among both cadres and the public, particularly Party members.

On a broader scale, the structural, institutional, and cultural factors identified above exert a profound influence on the pursuit of GE in politics. These elements significantly shape female cadres' participation in Party Committees, underscoring the need for continued efforts to dismantle systemic barriers to women's political representation in Vietnam.

CHAPTER III: PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE CADRES IN PARTY COMMITTEES IN THUA THIEN HUE AND LAM DONG PROVINCES

3.1. Measures implemented by Provincial Party Committees and subordinate Party Committees and their results

Based on the analysis of the materials collected, several key findings can be identified as follows:

(1) The Party Committees and leaders in the two provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong have promptly issued resolutions, directives, and action plans to concretize the Central Party's regulations.[4] Local adaptations and supplementary provisions have been flexibly introduced to enhance effectiveness. For example, in Thua Thien Hue, all nine district, town, and Hue City Party Committees have enacted resolutions and action plans to implement Politburo Resolution No. 11 and Standing Provincial Party Committee Resolution No. 07.

The Provincial Party Committees and Standing Committees in both provinces prioritize the creation of favorable conditions for female cadres to participate in leadership and management. This commitment is recognized as a fundamental responsibility of Party Committees, government agencies, and local authorities, particularly at the grassroots level. The objective is to enhance women's participation in political activities and address potential shortages of female cadres.

To this end, the Provincial Party Committees have systematically directed subordinate Party organizations, provincial departments, agencies, and mass organizations to disseminate and implement policies promoting female cadre development. Efforts have been made to raise awareness within localities, agencies, and units. Additionally, rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been established to oversee the implementation of Resolution No. 11. Most Party Committees in the provinces conduct periodic assessments, identifying challenges and constraints in female cadre development to ensure timely interventions.

Inspection and supervision activities serve as a mechanism to hold accountable agencies and localities that have not sufficiently prioritized female cadre development. These activities function as reminders for relevant entities to reinforce their commitment to fostering female leadership within the political system

[4] For example: Conclusion 126-KL/TU, dated April 14, 2015, at the 19th Conference of the Provincial Party Executive Committee of Thua Thien Hue (TTH), Term XIV, on continuing the implementation of Resolution 11-NQ/TW; Plan 83-KH/TU, dated September 19, 2018, from the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee of TTH on implementing Directive 21-CT/TƯ, dated January 20, 2018, by the Secretariat on continuing to strengthen women's work in the new context; Regulation 700-QĐ/TU, dated April 20, 2022, by the Provincial Party Committee of TTH on staff planning; Regulation 892-QĐ/TU, dated September 12, 2022, from the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee of TTH on staff rotations; Official Letter No. 2045-CV/TU, dated March 28, 2018, from the Provincial Party Committee of Lâm Đồng (LĐ), directing all levels and sectors to implement Directive No. 21-CT/TƯ; Plan No. 28-KH/TU, dated April 21, 2017, from the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee of LĐ on "Implementing the planning of leadership and management staff for the 2020–2025 term and subsequent years," etc.

(2) The planning and development of female cadre resources have been integrated into the provinces' leadership and management cadre planning strategies, aligned with the trend of building a sustainable and continuous female cadre pipeline. The implementation process has been carried out rigorously, ensuring compliance with procedures, standards, and the promotion of democracy in accordance with guidelines from the Central Organization Committee and the Provincial Party Standing Committee on cadre planning. The Party Committees at all levels have proactively developed specific plans and policies to ensure sufficient representation of female cadres in the cadre planning pool at all levels.

- The Party Committees have prioritized the identification and development of female cadres with leadership potential for nomination to Party Committees and local government positions. This process involves close coordination with relevant agencies to evaluate and assess female cadres, integrating them into structured planning and training programs based on established criteria. Additionally, female cadres are nominated for leadership and management positions at various levels. Leadership within numerous Party Committees has actively supported and facilitated opportunities for female cadres to demonstrate their capabilities, leading to significant advancements in female cadre development. A notable example is Thuan Loc Ward, Hue City (Thua Thien Hue Province), where the Party Secretary, with the confidence and support of higher-level authorities, has demonstrated exceptional performance in her role. This serves as a prominent example of female leadership development within the city and province.

- Proactive strategies for recruiting female cadres and party members. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of female Party members. For instance, in Thua Thien Hue Province, from January 1, 2024, to November 2024, 914 out of 1,591 newly admitted Party members were women, constituting 57.4% of the total. In Lam Dong Province, as of July 2024, 5,478 new Party members were admitted during the 2020–2025 term, of whom 49.16% were women. This growing representation provides a critical pool of candidates for female participation in Party Committees in the coming years.

- Efforts to identify and train female cadres extend beyond Party and state agencies to include public service units. The Party Committees in both provinces have prioritized the development of female cadres in educational institutions, where the proportion of women is particularly high. This demographic constitutes a valuable resource for female cadre planning and placement within Party Committees. In recent years, Party Committees in these provinces have appointed several female cadres from the education sector to key leadership positions at the local level.
- Preparing cadre pools above Central requirements: to ensure a consistent and timely selection of female cadres, Party Committees have exceeded the Central-level requirements, particularly at the district and commune levels. In Thua Thien Hue, female cadres planned for the Executive Committee of commune-level Party Committees accounted for 31.65% during the 2020–2025 term, increasing to 33.18% for the 2025–

2030 term. In Lam Dong, the corresponding figures were 32% and 39%, respectively. Some local Party Committees have implemented stringent measures to enhance the success rate of planned female cadres, including strategic placements in appropriate Party and government positions.

- Most Party Committees have strictly implemented the Party's regulations on female cadre work through regular inspections and firm requirements for ensuring the planned percentage of female cadres. This has been more rigorously enforced in recent years.
- Female cadre training and capacity building have been initiated early in some localities and implemented through diverse programs, including professional and political theory training. These efforts ensure quality and align with planning to ensure the timely availability of qualified female cadres. For instance, since 2021, 37.5% of female cadres in Thua Thien Hue have received political theory training, a key requirement for Party Committee participation. In Lam Dong, 45.8% of female cadres have participated in training programs since 2015. The Party Committees of both provinces have also recommended to central authorities improvements in training formats, schedules, and support policies for female cadres attending training programs.
- In alignment with local economic conditions, Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong have implemented financial support policies for female cadres undergoing training, supplementing national policies. In Thua Thien Hue, female cadres receive an additional monthly stipend of 300,000 VND during training, while in Lam Dong, they are provided an additional daily allowance of 20,000 VND. These measures contribute to ensuring gender inclusivity and equitable opportunities within the Party's leadership structure.

(3) In 2024, as part of the cadre rotation process, the Lam Dong Provincial Party Committee appointed two female district Party Secretaries in Lac Duong and Don Duong districts. The selection of rotation placements for female cadres has been given particular attention by leadership, ensuring both strategic assignments and financial support. In Lam Dong, female cadres undergoing rotation receive, in addition to standard allowances, an additional monthly allowance equivalent to 0.3 times the base salary.

(4) Women's Unions at various levels have assumed a crucial role in Party development, particularly in advising on the nomination of female cadres to Party Committees. Communication efforts have been strengthened and diversified, significantly enhancing awareness of GE among cadres and the general public, especially Party members in both provinces. Notably, 82% of Party members who participated in the online survey affirmed that Party work is equally suitable for both men and women.

(5) Most Most female cadres in the two provinces have made significant efforts to overcome challenges associated with balancing family and professional responsibilities. For instance, a female leader in Da Lat City highlighted the difficulties female cadres face in fulfilling their duties: *"From a family perspective, I must arrange and manage everything to fulfill my*

professional responsibilities to the best of my ability. Male leaders often receive support from their wives in handling family matters. In contrast, female leaders must simultaneously manage state duties and family obligations. Without proper balance, family conflicts may arise. Therefore, female leaders must exert greater effort, invest more time, and expend more energy than their male counterparts to meet job requirements". Many female cadres have continuously enhanced their leadership skills and raised awareness of women's roles in politics while effectively performing their assigned duties. According to an online survey, 68.5% of Party members assessed female cadres serving in Party Committees as performing well or very well in their roles, with 76.1% of female respondents supporting this evaluation. Additionally, the majority of survey participants indicated that female cadres perform at a level comparable to their male counterparts in fulfilling their duties. The findings further suggest that the competence and professional standards exhibited by male and female Party Committee members in their respective workplaces are equivalent.

Owing to the concerted efforts of Party Committees and unit leaders, the representation of female cadres in Party Committees at various levels in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong has increased significantly. Both provinces have generally achieved the minimum target of 15% female membership in Party Committees and ensured the presence of at least one female member in the Standing Committees.

In Thua Thien Hue, the proportion of female district-level Party Committee members for the 2020–2025 term increased by 1.9 percentage points compared to the 2015–2020 term, while the proportion at the commune level rose by 3 percentage points within the same period. Notably, all districts, cities, and towns in the province have female representatives in the Standing Committees of their respective District Party Committees for the 2020–2025 term. Similarly, in Lam Dong, the proportion of female district-level Party Committee members increased by 3 percentage points in the 2020–2025 term compared to the previous term, while the proportion at the commune level grew by 1 percentage point. The consistent rise in the number of female civil servants and Party members indicates a strong potential for further expansion of female cadre representation in both provinces.

3.2. Challenges in increasing the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees

While initial progress has been made in increasing female representation in Party Committees through various initiatives, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong remains below the targets set by Politburo Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW and comparatively low relative to other localities. Moreover, significant disparities persist within these provinces.

In Thua Thien Hue, for example, female representation in the Hue City Party Committee stands at 23.3%, while it is 23.1% in the Huong Thuy Town Party Committee. In contrast, the proportions in Phong Dien and Phu Vang District Party Committees are only 12.5%. Disparities are also evident within Huong Thuy Town, where the proportion of female Party Committee members in Thuy Duong Ward is 33.3%, compared to only 13.3% in Thuy Thanh Commune.

Similarly, in Lam Dong, female representation in the Da Lat City Party Committee is 26.3%, whereas it is only 13.3% in the Lac Duong District Party Committee. Within Da Lat City, the overall proportion of female Party Committee members at the commune/ward level is 26.3%. However, in Ward 7, no female cadres are present in the Ward Party Committee.

Beyond the broader policy challenges previously discussed, several specific factors contribute to these disparities:

(1) **At certain grassroots Party Committees, leadership has not been sufficiently proactive in identifying effective measures to increase female representation in Party Committees**. Consequently, they often cite a lack of available female candidates or inadequate preparedness as reasons for the low participation of women. According to an online survey, 18.6% of Party members believe that Party Committees and their leaders do not genuinely prioritize the promotion of female cadres. This concern is more pronounced in units with a lower proportion of female Party Committee members. Specifically, in units where female representation in Party Committees is below 15%, 22.2% of surveyed Party members reported that their respective Party Committees had not paid adequate attention to developing female cadres.

Furthermore, 63.8% of Party members identified limited access to training and professional development as a key barrier to participating in Party Committees. Female cadres reported this challenge at a higher rate, with 66.7% highlighting insufficient training and capacity-building opportunities.

Survey results also indicate that, in certain units, there is no clear roadmap or concrete plan for promoting female cadres, particularly concerning talent identification and training. In some Party Committees, the planning process for female cadres remains superficial, resulting in "nominal planning" where high planning ratios do not translate into actual election success. As one district-level Party leader in Lam Dong stated, *"Some grassroots officials rely on Directive No. 35, assuming that achieving 15% female representation in Party Committees is sufficient, without understanding that this figure represents only the minimum threshold set by the Central Government*."

One contributing factor is the lack of integration between Party Committee planning and government positions. The role of Party leadership is crucial in ensuring a long-term strategy for training, planning, and appointing female cadres to positions that align with Party Committee structures. A district leader in Lam Dong noted, *"Many female cadres are included in the planning process, but due to a lack of corresponding government positions, they often fail to be elected."* Similarly, another district-level leader in Thua Thien Hue observed, "*While the nomination rate for female cadres meets expectations, weak directive oversight results in their failure to secure election to Party Committees*."

(2) **Gender stereotypes persist among Party members and Party Committee members, affecting both men and women**. These stereotypes primarily result in the underestimation of women's management and leadership abilities. Some Party members maintain the belief that women are unsuitable for leadership roles and that female cadres are less competent than their male counterparts.

An online survey indicates that 17.4% of respondents believe that "women's abilities are more limited than men's," while 23% assert that "leadership roles are more suited to men." Additionally, some male Party members do not actively support women's participation in

politics. For instance, male Party members consistently rated female cadres lower in performance evaluations than their female counterparts. Female respondents were also more likely than male respondents to identify gender stereotypes in the community as a significant barrier to their participation in Party Committees.

Notably, a considerable number of female cadres internalize stereotypes regarding their leadership abilities. According to the online survey, the percentage of Party members who agreed on the necessity of female representation in Party Committees in the next term showed minimal variation between genders, with 63.2% of male Party members and 66.9% of female Party members in agreement. Likewise, only 66.7% of female Party members believed that female cadres could serve as Party Secretaries, a figure comparable to 64.4% of male Party members.

A key factor contributing to the relegation of female cadres to deputy secretarial or committee member roles is the perception that "*women have a more limited vision than men*" (19.7%) and "*women have more limited leadership abilities than men*" (10.8%). Notably, there was no significant difference in these perceptions between male and female respondents. In fact, a higher proportion of female Party members (11.2%) than male Party members (10.5%) endorsed the belief that "women have more limited leadership abilities than men".

An official provided further insight into the underrepresentation of female cadres, attributing their lower election rates to deficiencies in three key criteria: soft skills (such as driving, social engagement, and networking), qualifications, and competence (including hesitancy to innovate or lack of confidence). Gender stereotypes also shape career choices, with most women gravitating towards cultural and social sectors, making it difficult to identify female candidates for positions in economics, engineering, and technology at various governmental levels. Since these roles are frequently integrated into Party Committee structures, the limited representation of women is further exacerbated**.**

Gender stereotypes persist in the perception that household management is primarily a woman's responsibility. A female cadre from the Co Ho ethnic group in Lam Dong, where families follow a matriarchal system, stated: *"Although women make decisions in our families, if we fail to manage household affairs and focus solely on social work, the family will collapse."* Similarly, a female city-level cadre in Lam Dong shared: *"When I assumed the position of Chairwoman of the Women's Union, my mother warned me: 'Find another job, or your husband will leave you'."*

Several female leaders participating in discussions highlighted that their ability to engage in social work depends significantly on their family's financial stability and their husbands' support. Many officials cited household responsibilities as a major barrier preventing female cadres from dedicating time to training and capacity-building programs, which are crucial for meeting leadership requirements. According to an online survey, 48% of Party members identified "women needing to take care of the family" as a primary reason why female cadres are often confined to roles such as deputy secretaries or committee members. This view was supported by 49.4% of male respondents and 45.8% of female respondents. Additionally, 29% of female respondents emphasized that childcare and household duties posed significant challenges to their participation in Party Committees.

(3) **A significant factor contributing to the low representation of female cadres in Party Committees is the lack of determination, confidence, and ambition among some female**

cadres. When surveyed on the reasons for this underrepresentation, 32.8% of Party members cited "*women's lack of determination*" as the primary cause. Discussions at the local level corroborated this finding. Surveys conducted in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong indicated that certain competent female cadres in the education and healthcare sectors, despite being identified for leadership and management positions, opted to remain in specialized roles. One female cadre explained: *"Women often choose to delay career advancement for a few years to focus on childcare during the crucial first 36 months. They prioritize stability and family, considering professional progression as a secondary concern to be pursued later."*

(4) **Non-specialized workers represent an important pool of potential female cadres in localities. However, the current level of support for this group is very low, making them insecure in their roles**. Additionally, amidst the ongoing organizational restructuring, their opportunities to become civil servants (a prerequisite for joining Party Committees) are extremely limited. As a result, many non-specialized female workers have left their roles after a few years of service in localities.

(5) **In some localities, the agencies responsible for cadre work face difficulties in identifying potential female cadres, particularly those outside their own organizations or units**. Consequently, when opportunities arise to appoint cadres, these agencies are often unable to advise leaders promptly on training, planning, rotation, or appointment decisions for female cadres. For example, identifying potential female cadres requires organizational departments at the district level or higher to track the number and quality of female students in the area, as well as female workers in professional organizations and economic entities (who may not fall under local management). This data forms the foundation for identifying women who can be included in training and planning for leadership and management roles. However, this task remains challenging due to the lack of digitized human resource information and weak connections between organizations.

Due to these challenges, the proportion of female cadres participating in Party Committees in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong remains relatively low compared to the national average. The proportions of female cadres in Party Committees and Standing Committees across the three levels in the surveyed localities are illustrated in the figures below.

Figure 6. Percentage of females participating in provincial, district, and communal Party Committees in 2024 in surveyed areas of Thua Thien Hue

Unit: %

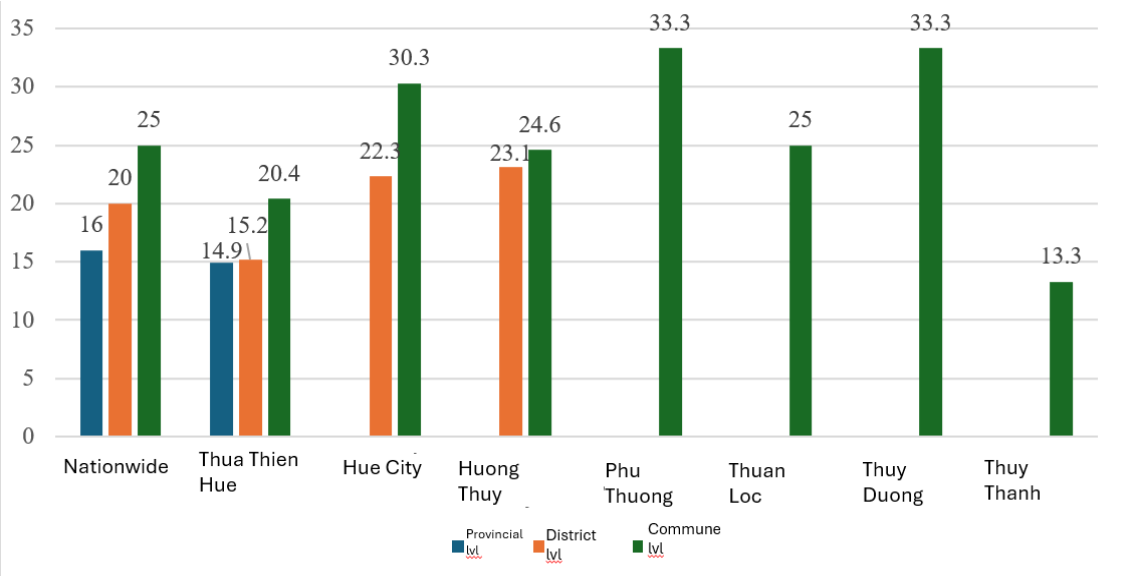


Figure 7. Percentage of females participating in Standing Committees at provincial, district, and communal levels in 2024 in surveyed areas of Thua Thien Hue

Unit: %

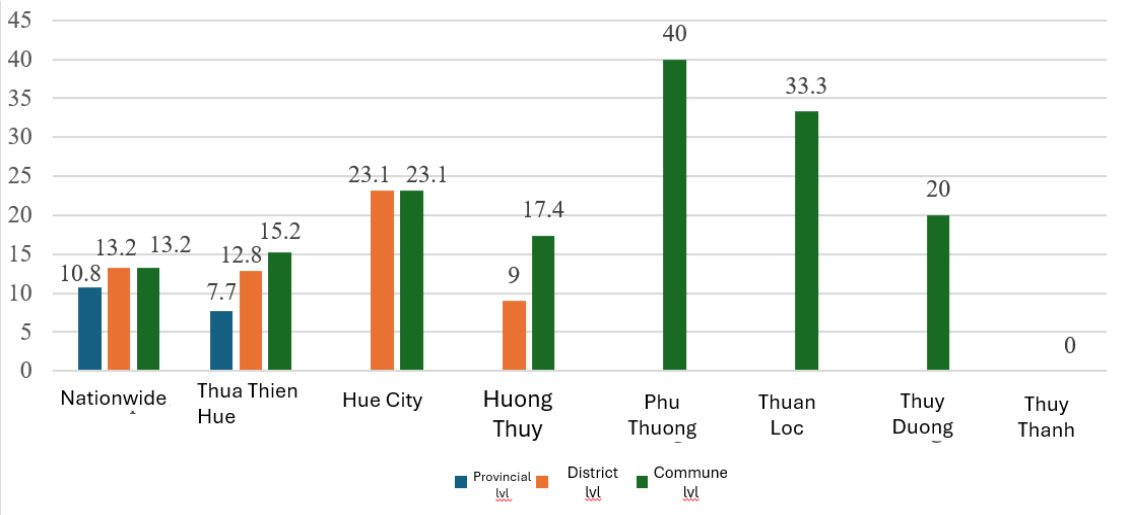


Figure 8. Percentage of females participating in provincial, district, and communal Party Committees in 2024 in surveyed areas of Lam Dong

Unit: %

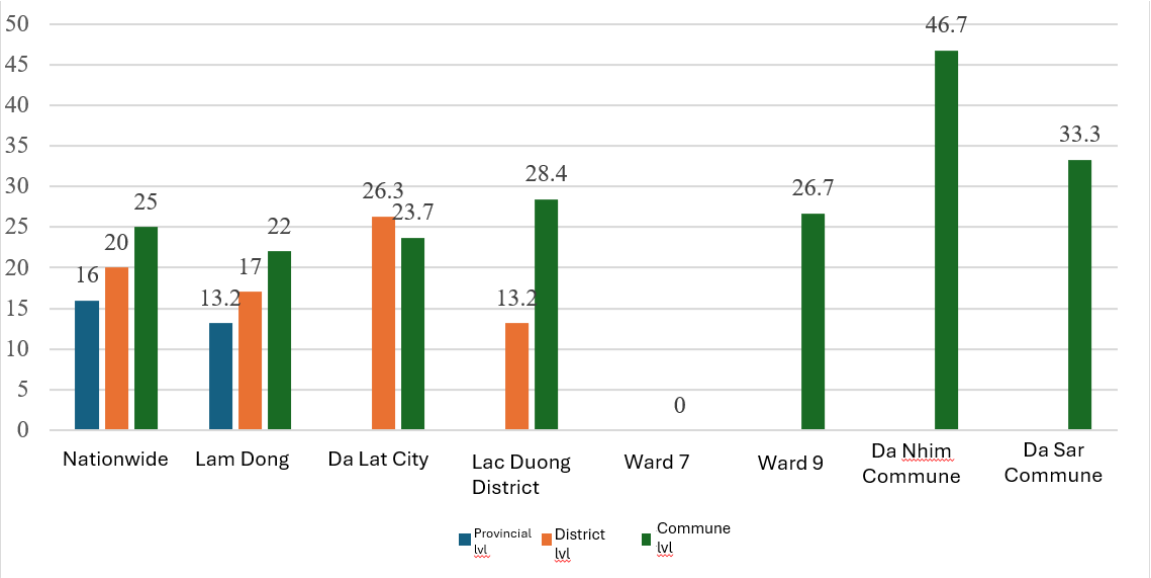
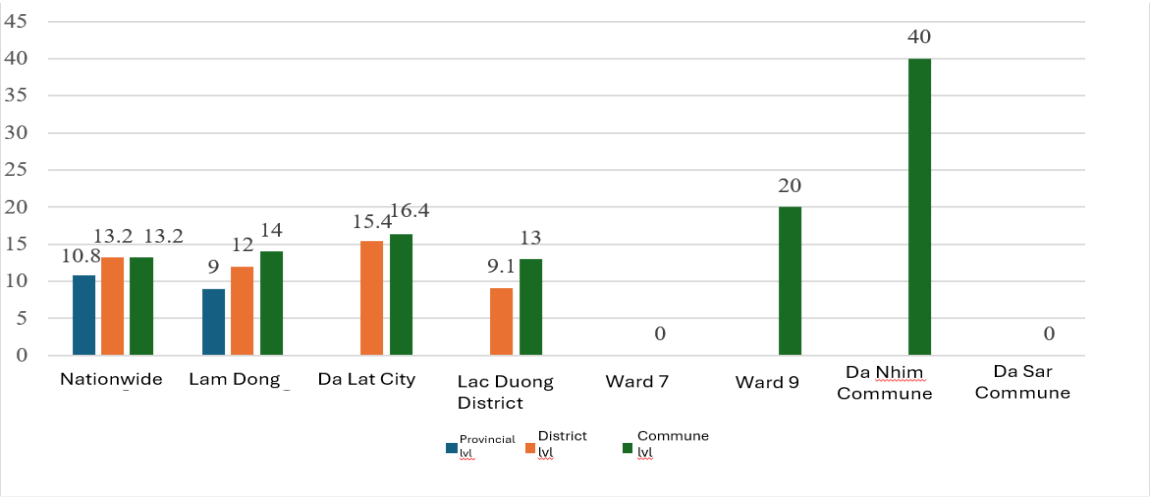


Figure 9. Percentage of females participating in Standing Committees at provincial, district, and communal levels in 2024 in surveyed areas of Lam Dong

Unit: %



The data from the charts indicate that the representation of female cadres in Party Committees varies across localities. In Hue City and Huong Thuy Town, the proportion of female members in district-level Party Committees is lower than that in commune-level Party Committees. Conversely, in Da Lat City and Lac Duong District, the proportion of female members in district-level Party Committees exceeds that at the commune level. These variations in female cadre participation cannot be attributed solely to the level of economic development. Rather, they underscore the pivotal role of leadership and Party Committees in implementing measures to advance GE, particularly in political participation.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

In recent years, the CPV has issued multiple directives aimed at strengthening the female cadre workforce and increasing women's participation in Party Committees. These directives have been supplemented with detailed guidelines and the implementation of necessary measures at the local level. However, despite these efforts, the proportion of female cadres in Party Committees at all levels remains significantly below the target established in Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW (2007). Additionally, female participation rates vary considerably across regions and localities, with the North Central, Central Coastal, and Central Highlands regions recording the lowest levels of female representation in Party Committees.

The primary factors contributing to this disparity are institutional and cultural in nature. Institutionally, certain policy deficiencies hinder the advancement of female cadres. Existing regulations on training, cadre rotation, and planning lack gender sensitivity, and some targets for female representation remain non-mandatory. Furthermore, delays in policy implementation have disproportionately affected female cadres, creating additional challenges in fulfilling the requirements for promotion and appointment compared to their male counterparts. Culturally, deeply ingrained gender stereotypes within society, as well as among some cadres and Party members, continue to obstruct the professional development and leadership opportunities of female cadres.

Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong are among the provinces with below-average female representation in Party Committees. Recognizing this issue, Party Committees in both provinces have implemented practical measures in recent years to promote female cadre development, with a specific focus on increasing female participation in Party Committees.

Most Party Committees and leaders in these provinces have prioritized female cadre development by promptly issuing resolutions, directives, and action plans to concretize the Central Party's guidelines. The planning and development of female cadres have been rigorously executed in compliance with established procedures and standards set forth by the Central Organization Committee. Cadre rotation has been prioritized and carried out systematically, ensuring structural balance, quality, and frequency while aligning with cadre training, development, and succession planning. Female cadres undergoing rotation have received special attention from leadership regarding placement selection and financial support.

Most female cadres in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong have demonstrated resilience and dedication in overcoming challenges related to balancing family responsibilities while effectively fulfilling their professional duties. Women's Unions (Hội LHPN) in both provinces have increasingly played a significant role in Party development and advisory processes concerning the nomination of female cadres to Party Committees. Additionally, communication and awareness initiatives have been strengthened through various methods, contributing to increased awareness of GE among cadres and the general public, particularly among Party members.

Despite these efforts, the development of female cadres in the two provinces faces substantial challenges in implementing Party policies at the grassroots level. In addition to common difficulties associated with central regulations, the following key issues have been identified: (i) At certain grassroots Party Committees, leadership has not proactively sought measures to increase the proportion of female cadres. Female cadre development in some units lacks structured planning and implementation. (ii) Persistent stereotypes regarding the roles, positions, and competencies of women remain prevalent among some Party members and Party Committee members. (iii) Some female cadres exhibit insufficient confidence, motivation, and ambition for advancement. (iv) A significant number of non-specialized workers, including many women, have left their positions due to inadequate support, resulting in an imminent shortage of female cadre resources. (v) There is no established or regularly updated system for tracking potential female cadre resources, making it challenging for Party leaders to monitor and appoint female cadres in a timely manner.

Experiences from localities with a high proportion of female cadres in Party Committees, such as Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc, demonstrate that while resources are important, they are not the decisive factor in increasing female participation. The most critical element is the proactive and determined leadership of Party Committees and their leaders, combined with the self-driven efforts of female cadres. When Party Committees and leaders demonstrate strong and sustained commitment, GE measures can be effectively implemented. For instance, the Binh Duong Provincial Party Committee established Female Cadre Task Forces to assist Party Committees in enhancing the role of female cadres. The practice of "reserving positions for female cadres" in planning and appointments has proven to be an effective measure. Additionally, policies supporting female cadres in training, integrating GE principles into cadre rotation, and enforcing regulations on planning, training, and capacity-building for all cadres, including female cadres, are essential strategies for increasing female representation in Party Committees.

4.2. Policy and practical recommendations

In the forthcoming period, efforts to promote GE and women's political participation will encounter both opportunities and challenges. The increased attention of the Party and the State to the development of female cadres will facilitate greater female representation in Party Committees. Additionally, the growing proportion of female civil servants and Party members will expand the pool of qualified female cadres. However, in the context of ongoing administrative restructuring and organizational reforms, the recruitment and advancement of cadres, including female cadres, will face significant challenges.

Drawing on an analysis of Party directives, lessons from both successful and challenging experiences regarding female cadre participation in Party Committees across various localities, and practical implementation in Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong, the research team proposes several macro-level policy solutions at the central level. Furthermore, specific recommendations are outlined for Party Committees and local leadership to strengthen the representation and participation of female cadres in Party Committees in the future.

Improving policies and regulations at the central level

(1) Consider increasing the target percentage of women among Party Committee candidates at all levels and issuing more binding regulations on female cadre participation in Party Committees (not merely stating "strive for" or "encourage").

(2) Enhance inspection and supervision efforts to ensure compliance with Party resolutions and directives on female cadre work. Localities that fail to implement these regulations effectively should undergo assessment, with appropriate corrective actions or disciplinary measures applied.

(3) Implementing measures to promote GE is crucial for increasing female participation in Party Committees and ensuring substantive equality. It is essential to adjust policies related to female cadre development to create more favorable conditions for their involvement in leadership roles. For instance, flexible policies should be introduced for both young female cadres and those aged 40 and above regarding training and appointment age, training criteria, formats for professional and political theory training (full-time or part-time), cadre rotation methods and conditions, as well as support policies for balancing work and family responsibilities. In the current context of organizational restructuring, priority should be given to appointing female cadres as unit heads if they meet the same qualifications as male counterparts. Additionally, efforts should focus on improving policies for non-specialized personnel, many of whom are women, to build a strong pipeline of female cadres for future Party Committees.

(4) Establish a centralized data system to monitor female leadership development and track female participation in Party Committees. This system will enable proactive planning, timely inclusion of female cadres, and better comparison of participation rates across different localities.

(5) Enhance research efforts and organize workshops and conferences ocused on female participation in Party Committees. Given the limited research and the challenges in practical implementation, fostering knowledge exchange and evidence-based policymaking is crucial.

Solutions related to Party Committees and local leaders

Based on in-depth research conducted in the two provinces of Thua Thien Hue and Lam Dong, the research team proposes the following solutions related to the role of Party Committees and local leaders:

(1) Party Committees and leaders must rigorously implement the Party's directives to enhance the participation of female cadres in Party Committees, particularly in those with low female participation rates. Detailed and synchronized action plans must be developed across all stages of female cadre work, including training, capacity building, rotation, planning, and appointments. Higher-level Party Committees should strengthen inspections and oversight of the implementation of Party resolutions and directives on female cadres and evaluate the performance of subordinate organizations responsible for this work. Consider establishing a Task

Force on Female Cadres, led by the Party Committee Secretary, to regularly review, draw lessons, and evaluate the Task Force's annual performance.

(2) Female cadre development should begin at the recruitment stage for civil servants, public employees, and Party members, ensuring that young female cadres have opportunities to hold key positions at the grassroots level. Efforts should focus on identifying potential female candidates early, particularly among high school and university students, with a strong emphasis on university students. Cadre planning must be regularly reviewed to maintain a continuous pipeline of qualified female cadres, ensuring timely appointments to new or vacant positions in Party Committees. In the short term, consideration should be given to reserving vacant Party Committee positions for female candidates until suitable individuals are identified.

(3) Cadre rotation should be recognized as a key strategy for increasing the number of female cadres in Party Committees. Female cadres should be assigned appropriate roles and rotated systematically to gain necessary experience. Provincial Party Committees should proactively propose pilot rotation and training solutions to the Central Committee, specifically designed for female cadres. These initiatives should incorporate flexible timelines and formats to ensure broader participation and effectiveness.

(4) Planning efforts should be closely aligned with appointments and cadre assignments, ensuring appropriate positions are identified so that female cadres can secure election to Party Committees during elections.

(5) Female cadres should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in their roles. Training and capacity-building programs should focus on professional expertise, organizational management, and strategic planning. Strengthening the quality of female cadres in Party Committees, as well as female leaders and managers, will contribute to long-term sustainable development. Additionally, female cadres should take an active role in enhancing their competencies to meet the demands of leadership positions.

(6) Special attention should be given to training and developing VWU leaders who are in the leadership pipeline but do not yet meet the criteria for Party Committees. This will help build a strong pool of local female Party Committee members. Women's Unions at all levels should continue playing a key role in Party development by identifying and recommending high-potential female cadres to local Party Committees.

(7) Continue strengthening communication efforts to raise awareness among cadres and Party members about the importance of female cadre work and women's participation in Party Committees. These efforts should be tailored to different target groups, including Party Committees, male cadres, and potential female leaders. Regular dissemination of the Party's regulations on female cadre work should utilize diverse communication methods, focusing on changing gender stereotypes about women's leadership capabilities, addressing self-doubt among female cadres while encouraging their ambition and effort, and promoting greater family support for women in politics. Women's Unions at all levels should lead communication campaigns to showcase and widely share successful models of families that actively support women in Party Committees and leadership roles./.

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APPENDIX

Characteristics of surveyed areas

I. THUA THIEN HUE PROVINCE

1. Hue city (under Thua Thien Hue province) and two wards

- **Hue city** is a first-class city and the Festival City of Vietnam, serving as a significant cultural and tourism hub in Central Vietnam and the country as a whole. As of December 2024, the city spans an area of 265.99 km² and has a population of 652,572. The Hue City Party Committee comprises 122 subordinate branches and committees, including 70 committees and 52 branches. These encompass 36 ward and commune Party Committees (29 wards and 7 communes), 45 administrative and professional branches and committees, 25 enterprise branches and committees, and 16 school branches and committees. The Party Committee has a total membership of 17,548, with female representation in the Executive Committee for the 2020-2025 term standing at 23.3%. At the commune level, female Party Committee members constitute 30.3% (Hue City Party Committee report, November 15, 2024).

- **Phu Thuong ward:** Located in the northeastern part of Hue City, Phu Thuong Ward comprises 5,314 households, with a total population of 18,796, organized into nine residential groups. The ward spans 589.85 hectares and has experienced rapid urbanization. The Party Committee consists of 16 subordinate branches with 567 members. Female representation in the ward's Party Committee stands at 33.3% (Hue City Party Committee report, November 15, 2024).
- **Thuan Loc ward** was formed through the merger of the former Thuan Loc and Phu Binh Wards on July 1, 2021. The ward is currently implementing a relocation and clearance project for the protected area of the Hue Imperial Citadel, affecting over one thousand households across eight sites. It spans 1.96 km² and has a population of 30,099. The Party Committee comprises 21 branches with 621 members. The proportion of female members in the ward's Party Committee was initially reported as 25% but later increased to 30.8% (Hue City Party Committee report, November 15, 2024; Report No. 177-BC/DU, November 12, 2024).

2. Huong Thuy Town and Two Communes/Wards

- **Huong Thuy Town**, centrally located in Thua Thien Hue Province, spans 426.96 km² with a population of 100,208. The Huong Thuy Town Party Committee oversees 52 grassroots Party organizations, including 17 committees and 35 branches, with a total of 4,143 members. Female representation in the Executive Committee for the 2020-2025 term is 23.1%, while at the commune level, it is 24.6% (Huong Thuy Town Party Committee report, November 21, 2024).
- **Thuy Thanh Commune**: Situated in a low-lying area of Huong Thuy Town, Thuy Thanh Commune lies 5 km from Hue City. It features five historical and cultural monuments recognized by the government. The Party Committee consists of 19 subordinate branches with

281 members. As of November 2024, female representation in the commune's Party Committee is 13.3% (Huong Thuy Town Party Committee report, November 21, 2024).

- **Thuy Duong ward** located in the western part of Huong Thuy Town, Thuy Duong Ward covers 12.50 km² and has a population of 16,852 (3,993 households). Since its transition from a commune to a ward in 2010, it has developed into a key economic, cultural, and social hub of the town. The Party Committee comprises 21 subordinate branches with 470 members, of whom 33.3% are female (Huong Thuy Town Party Committee report, November 21, 2024).

II. LAM DONG PROVINCE

1. DA LAT city and two wards

- **Da Lat City:** As a first-class city under Lam Dong Province, Da Lat serves as the province's political, economic, cultural, and social center. The city spans 391.15 km² and has a population exceeding 270,000. It consists of 16 administrative divisions, including 12 wards and 4 communes. The Da Lat City Party Committee includes 67 grassroots Party organizations, comprising 28 Party committees (with 344 subordinate branches) and 39 grassroots Party branches, totaling 8,333 members. Female representation within the Party Committee stands at 33.1%. As of December 2024, female members constitute 26.3% of the City Party Committee and 23.7% of ward/commune Party Committees (Report No. 355-BC/ThU, December 13, 2024).
- **Ward 7** characterized by a sprawling terrain and a sparsely distributed population; Ward 7 is located at a significant distance from Da Lat City center. The ward consists of 14 residential groups, including one primarily inhabited by ethnic minorities. The Party Committee comprises 20 subordinate branches with 280 members. The proportion of female members in the Party Committee initially stood at 7.7% but has since declined to 0% (Report No. 355-BC/ThU, December 13, 2024).
- **Ward 9** is a commercial and service hub within Da Lat City, hosting a variety of businesses and economic sectors. The Party Committee comprises 29 subordinate branches with a total of 1,220 members. Female representation in the ward's Party Committee is 26.7% (Report No. 355-BC/ThU, December 13, 2024).

2. Lac Duong district and 02 communes

- **Lac Duong district**, located in the northern part of Lam Dong Province, is a mountainous area covering 131,393 hectares. The district comprises five communes and one town, with a total population of 32,997, of whom 66.5% belong to ethnic minorities. The Party Committee includes 33 grassroots Party organizations (10 Party committees and 23 grassroots branches), totaling 1,455 members. Female representation is 42.7%, with 13.2% in the District Party Committee and 28.4% at the commune level (Report No. 411-BC/HU, November 20, 2024).

- **Da Nhim commune** spans 23,903 hectares and consists of five hamlets with 1,280 households and 5,748 residents, of whom 78.6% belong to 11 different ethnic groups. Approximately 80% of the population practices Protestantism. The Party Committee comprises 11 branches with

129 members, including 121 official members. Female Party members constitute 42.6%, while ethnic minorities represent 49.6%. The proportion of female members in the commune's Party Committee is 46.7% (Report No. 411-BC/HU, November 20, 2024).

- **Da Sar commune**, situated in the northeastern part of Lac Duong District, is approximately 12.5 km from the district center. It covers 24,806.84 hectares and has a population of 6,258 across 1,553 households in six hamlets. Ethnic minorities comprise 86.9% of the population. Over 75% of the residents practice Protestantism, with a small Buddhist community. The Party Committee consists of 11 branches with 158 members. During the 2020-2025 term, female representation in the commune's Party Committee stands at 33.3% (Report No. 411-BC/HU, November 20, 2024).