

Planning and developing a talent pool of grassroots-level cadres from ethnic minority groups in the western region of Nghe An province

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Abstract: *This article focuses on analyzing the current planning status and developing a talent pool of grassroots-level cadres from ethnic minority groups in the Western region of Nghe An province. Based on the analysis, the article proposes several measures to enhance the effectiveness of cadre planning and development, particularly for grassroots-level cadres from ethnic minorities. The ultimate goal is to build a contingent of ethnic minority cadres with an appropriate quantity, suitable structure, and full qualifications in terms of ethics and competence, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the Western region of Nghe An province.*

Keywords: *Planning; talent development; grassroots-level cadres; ethnic minorities; Western region of Nghe An province.*

1. Introduction

The Western region of Nghe An province is characterized by complex and rugged terrain, underdeveloped infrastructure, low human development indices, and challenging socio-economic conditions. It is considered one of the poorest areas in the country. However, this region holds a strategic position and is especially important in socio-economic development and national border security. With a 419-kilometer border adjacent to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, it occupies a crucial position in terms of

politics, economy, national defense, and security.

Given this context, building a strong contingent of ethnic minority officials in Western Nghe An is a long-term strategic task and an urgent requirement in the current period. In recent years, the Party Committee and People's Committee of Nghe An province, along with local authorities, have paid attention to this issue and achieved initial positive results. Currently, the grassroots-level contingent of ethnic minority officials in mountainous districts meets or

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exceeds professional qualifications and political theory standards as required.

However, despite these achievements, the development of the cadre workforce in general - and ethnic minority grassroots-level officials in particular - still faces certain limitations, most notably in the planning and preparation of a successor cadre pool. The Party has identified cadre planning and development as one of the key stages in the overall cadre work process, which is of special importance. For grassroots-level ethnic minority officials, planning and developing successors is necessary for continuity and proactiveness and requires a long-term vision and a scientific, methodical approach to meet immediate and future tasks.

President Ho Chi Minh once emphasized the importance of this task by likening it to “seed selection,” asserting: “In the seed selection period, if the seed is chosen well, the plant will be good” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

In the context of Western Nghe An, the planning and development of grassroots-level ethnic minority officials must be based on demographic characteristics, task requirements, cadre standards, and the specific conditions of each locality. Accordingly, long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans must be comprehensively and systematically developed to ensure continuity, stability, and improved care quality. This contributes to addressing the shortage of human resources while ensuring that the ethnic minority cadre contingent possesses the necessary political qualities, professional competence, and leadership and management capacity to meet the demands of sustainable local development.

2. Current situation of planning and developing grassroots-level ethnic minority cadres in Western districts of Nghe An province

As of December 2024, there were 2,290 grassroots-level officials in 210 communes across 11 Western districts of Nghe An

province, of whom 1,017 were ethnic minorities. Specifically, the region had 85 commune Party Committee Secretaries, 118 Deputy Secretaries, 89 Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons of the People’s Councils (in many cases, the Chairperson also concurrently served as Party Secretary or Deputy Secretary), 90 Chairpersons, and 136 Vice-Chairpersons of the People’s Committees, and 506 leaders of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and other grassroots-level political and social organizations. The number and proportion of ethnic minority officials relative to the total number of grassroots cadres in the Western region of Nghe An have been increasing.

In six districts with a large population of ethnic minorities - Ky Son, Tuong Duong, Que Phong, Quy Hop, Quy Chau, and Con Cuong - there are 863 ethnic minority grassroots officials, generally meeting the local governance demands. Of the total 1,018 grassroots-level ethnic minority officials in Western Nghe An in 2024, 646 are Thai people (63.46%), 272 are Tho (26.72%), 53 are Mong (5.21%), 28 are Kho Mu (2.75%), and 19 belong to other ethnic groups (1.86%).

In terms of structure, the ethnic minority cadre team is seeing positive changes with a more balanced gender and age distribution, ensuring continuity and development. However, male cadres remain dominant at 78.27%, while female officials account for only 21.73%. Most positions have a higher proportion of men; notably, no woman serves as Chairperson of the Veterans’ Association. Regarding age, those aged 41 - 50 account for the largest share (45.78%), followed by those aged 31 - 40 (33.89%), 51 and older (17.19%), and under 30 (3.14%). Encouragingly, the proportion of younger officials (under 40) increased by 2.3% in 2024 compared to 2020.

Cadre planning in the Western region of Nghe An has been implemented systematically and closely linked with other aspects of cadre management. Every year, local Party

Committees issue documents and guidelines on planning leadership and management cadres, which are disseminated to grassroots-level Party Committees, authorities, and socio-political organizations and must be followed according to established standards and procedures.

In recent years, Ky Son district has issued several documents on the planning of leadership and managerial cadres, which have been disseminated to Party Committees, grassroots-level Party cells, and branches. These include Official Dispatch No. 529-CV/HU dated March 7, 2022, on the review and supplementation of cadre planning for the 2020 - 2025 and 2025 - 2030 terms; Regulation No. 05-QD/HU dated March 7, 2022, on cadre planning; Guideline No. 19-HD/HU dated March 7, 2022 on specific issues related to cadre planning; and Official Dispatch No. 1072-CV/HU dated October 27, 2023 regarding care planning.

Similarly, Tan Ky District Party Committee has also issued annual documents for the review and supplementation of leadership and management cadre planning for the 2020 - 2025 term, including Official Dispatch No. 263-CV/HU dated March 18, 2022; Official Dispatch No. 406-CV/HU dated March 27, 2023; and Official Dispatch No. 542-CV/HU dated April 10, 2024.

In Que Phong district, numerous official dispatches, guidelines, and plans related to cadre planning have been issued, including: Official Dispatch No. 75-CV/HU dated January 13, 2021, on the periodic review and supplementation of leadership and management cadre planning for the 2020 - 2025 term; Regulation No. 09-QD/HU on cadre planning; Guideline No. 12-HD/HU on specific aspects of cadre planning; Official Dispatch No. 358-CV/HU on the review and supplementation of Party Committee planning and key leadership and managerial positions for the 2020 - 2025 and 2021 - 2026 terms; and

Plan No. 245-KH/HU dated May 20, 2024 on the review and supplementation of Party Committee and key leadership and managerial position planning for the 2020 - 2025 and 2021 - 2026 terms.

Based on the grassroots-level cadre planning, Party Committees at all levels in the Western districts of Nghe An province have annually developed training and professional development plans for grassroots-level cadres in general, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Alongside training and development efforts, the assignment, utilization, and rotation of ethnic minority grassroots cadres within the planning framework have also been actively directed and reasonably implemented by Party Committees. These efforts aim to gradually position planned ethnic minority cadres in suitable roles to help them gain experience, build credibility, and prepare for nomination or appointment to planned leadership positions.

The transparency of grassroots-level cadre planning for ethnic minorities has also been well implemented in the Western region of Nghe An province. The criteria for selecting cadres for planning were made public to all officials and Party members of the agencies and units involved in the nomination voting process. Evaluation conclusions for those included in the planning were disclosed to the Party committees, Party cells, and agency/unit leadership and were also individually communicated to the evaluated cadres. After approval, the list of planned cadres was announced to the grassroots-level Party committees and the leadership collectives of the relevant agencies.

Party Committees and local authorities in Western Nghe An have proactively carried out relatively comprehensive cadre evaluations, ensuring both content and methods align with position-based standards and assessment criteria and performance in fulfilling political tasks, thereby forming a foundation for cadre

planning. The review and supplementation of grassroots-level ethnic minority cadre planning for the 2020 - 2025 term and the subsequent 2025 - 2030 term have generally met requirements regarding quantity, structure across three age brackets, and proportions of young, female, and ethnic minority cadres by regulations.

Cadre planning has been implemented flexibly (“dynamically”) and with openness, closely linked to cadre rotation, training, and professional development. All personnel included in the planning met the required standards and conditions, and the prescribed procedures were followed in the planning process. Specifically, the proportion of ethnic minority cadres in the planning for the Party Executive Committees of communes, wards, and townships is 1,630 out of 8,996 cadres (18.12%); for the District Party Committee Standing Boards, 615 out of 3,231 cadres (19.03%); and key leadership positions at the commune, ward, and township level, 1,531 out of 16,088 cadres (9.52%).

According to the Quy Châu District Party Committee (Nghe An province, 2024), the planning results for the 2020 - 2025 term for positions under the management of the district-level Party Executive Committees and Standing Boards and other positions under the Provincial Party Standing Committee, include a total of 81 officials, of whom 45 are ethnic minorities (accounting for 55.56%). For commune-level Party Executive Committees, Standing Boards, and other positions under the district-level Party Standing Committee’s management, 750 officials were planned, with 558 being ethnic minorities (74.4%). In Que Phong district, the corresponding figures are 118 officials (57 ethnic minorities, accounting for 48.3%) and 1,017 officials (717 ethnic minorities, accounting for 70.5%) (Que Phong District Party Committee, Nghe An province, 2024). In Ky Son district, 101 officials were planned at the district level (68 ethnic

minorities, 67.33%) and 1,363 at the commune level (1,109 ethnic minorities, 81.36%) (Ky Son District Party Committee, Nghe An province, 2024).

However, cadre planning work has not always been rigorously carried out. In the Western region of Nghe An province, issues remain regarding preparing future personnel resources and grassroots-level ethnic minority cadres. For example, there is a shortage and a surplus of key leaders, a leadership gap and a lack of successor cadres, and a low proportion of young cadres and ethnic minority cadres relative to development needs. Furthermore, several issues persist in cadre affairs, particularly evaluation, training, and capacity building.

3. Solutions to improve the effectiveness of planning and developing grassroots-level ethnic minority cadres in the Western region of Nghe An province

First, strengthen the planning of grassroots-level ethnic minority cadres to ensure appropriate structure, quantity, and quality.

Planning the grassroots-level ethnic minority cadre workforce in the Western region of Nghe An province is complex and challenging yet crucial. Such planning must be grounded in scientific principles and closely aligned with the current political mission requirements. Based on projections for the region's development through 2030, cadre planning must prepare a high-quality, appropriately structured, and adequately staffed ethnic minority cadre pool. To achieve this, several key measures must be implemented:

(1) Comprehensive planning of the ethnic minority grassroots cadre workforce. First and foremost, the planning must be based on the implementation of political tasks and the development orientation of industrialization and modernization of rural areas in the Western region of Nghe An province. The

planning should meet immediate requirements and consider subsequent years to ensure a smooth transition between generations of grassroots ethnic minority cadres. It is necessary to firmly grasp the objectives, cadre standards, and organizational structure of the Western region's commune-level government apparatus to define the planning scope, from comprehensive planning by category to planning for each specific grassroots ethnic minority cadre position. Notably, efforts should be made to ensure that each grassroots ethnic minority cadre has two to three reserve candidates. Specialized positions must be carefully selected and thoroughly trained so that one cadre can serve as a potential candidate for two to three positions.

(2) Conduct a thorough investigation and assessment. The Party Committees and authorities in the Western region of Nghe An province must conduct surveys and investigations to accurately assess the quantity, qualifications, competencies, and aspirations of the grassroots ethnic minority cadres. This helps determine their capacity to fulfill assigned tasks and identify shortcomings in policies and regimes affecting this cadre group. From there, specific solutions and needs can be identified to plan, train, foster, and utilize cadres. The planning of grassroots ethnic minority cadres must be viewed holistically as a long-term process encompassing planning, sourcing, selection, training, and deployment.

(3) Accurately identify planning candidates. The planning must reflect the principles of development and elimination, including planned growth and “breakthrough” development. Candidates without prospects should be removed from the plan, while those not initially included but showing potential for development should be added. Correctly identifying the right candidates is crucial; however, the process must remain flexible and avoid rigidity.

(4) Regular monitoring, evaluation, and

supplementation of the planning pool. Cadre planning must ensure continuity, succession, legal validity, and practical feasibility. Localities and units in the Western region must base their planning on their respective functions, duties, and the current status of their cadre workforce to prepare a suitable cadre pipeline. It is essential to proactively develop plans for training, capacity building, placement, utilization, and rotation of cadres within the planning pool. Special attention should be given to female cadres and young ethnic minority cadres in planning.

(5) Strengthen coordination between professional agencies and cadre-utilizing entities. To ensure effective planning of ethnic minority grassroots cadres, the responsibility must not be delegated solely to organizational departments. Party Committees and relevant authorities must assume greater responsibility and ownership. Periodic reporting, inspection, and annual planning implementation evaluation should be institutionalized.

Second, fundamentally and sustainably improve the effectiveness of cultivating grassroots ethnic minority cadres. One of the fundamental factors in building a grassroots ethnic minority cadre team in the Western region of Nghe An province is training human resources for ethnic minority communities, which is closely linked with education and raising public awareness. This will contribute to creating equal development opportunities for grassroots ethnic minority cadres. Moving forward, to enhance the effectiveness of training and cultivating the grassroots ethnic minority cadre team, focus should be placed on the following key tasks:

(1) Continue to implement important resolutions and conclusions of the Party and Government on ethnic affairs, including: Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW dated March 12, 2003, of the 9th Central Committee on ethnic affairs; Conclusion No. 65-KL/TW dated October 30, 2019, of the Politburo on

continuing the implementation of Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW; Resolution No. 12/NQ-CP dated February 15, 2020, of the Government on implementing Resolution No. 88/2019/QH14 dated November 18, 2019, of the National Assembly approving the comprehensive socio-economic development plan for ethnic minority and mountainous areas for the 2021 - 2030 period; Resolution No. 52/NQ-CP dated June 15, 2016, of the Government on promoting the development of human resources for ethnic minorities during 2016-2020, with orientation toward 2030; Decision No. 402/QĐ-TTg dated March 14, 2016, of the Prime Minister approving the project for developing the contingent of cadres, civil servants, and public employees who are ethnic minorities in the new era. In addition, it is necessary to continue effectively implementing the training and fostering plan of the Standing Committee of the Nghe An Provincial Party Committee to achieve the goals of the 19th Provincial Party Congress for the 2020 - 2025 term. At the same time, a comprehensive and long-term training and fostering plan for cadres from the provincial to grassroots levels should be developed, with special attention to cadre source creation by position, female cadres, and ethnic minority cadres.

(2) Strengthen the training of ethnic minority children residing in the Western region of Nghe An province to create a source of cadres. It is necessary to plan the network of schools, diversify training forms, balance the fields of study, and emphasize education development at all levels. Training must closely follow the specific characteristics of each area to ensure effectiveness. Ethnic boarding schools have become an important strategic solution for the Western region of Nghe An province. These ethnic boarding schools must improve educational quality and strictly implement admission regulations to ensure the proper selection of candidates and

the appropriate scale for each type of school. At the same time, enrollment quotas should be established for each district and aligned with the local ethnic minority cadre planning. Districts also need to specify ethnic minority cadre planning in detail so that ethnic boarding schools can appropriately guide student streaming.

(3) Effectively implement the enrollment policy (cử tuyển) in the Western region of Nghe An province. The Nghe An Provincial Party Committee and Party Committees at all levels in the Western region need to issue regulations on criteria, policies, and coordination mechanisms among agencies and units to carry out the enrollment policy and arrange fields of study appropriate to the socio-economic development conditions of challenging areas. At the same time, leaders and Party Committees should direct agencies and organizations to create opportunities for ethnic minority children in remote areas to continue their studies at various educational levels and fields.

It is necessary to nurture excellent students so they have the capacity to be enrolled in universities, continuing to strengthen their general knowledge to meet the common academic standards required for university entrance exams. For ethnic minority students with good capacity and thinking ability, orientation towards colleges should be provided; for those with average capacity and thinking, guidance towards vocational or professional schools is appropriate.

Effectively implementing the enrollment policy (including enrolling students into ethnic boarding schools and sending students to vocational secondary schools, colleges, and universities) is a crucial foundation for fundamentally and sustainably improving the sourcing of ethnic minority cadres in the Western region of Nghe An province.

(4) Effectively source cadres from the group

of reputable and key individuals within the ethnic minority communities in the Western region of Nghe An province. Among the ethnic minority communities, reputable figures and core leaders, including religious leaders such as village elders and chiefs, play a crucial role in guiding the local people. Therefore, to build the grassroots cadre team of ethnic minorities in Western Nghe An, Party Committees must focus on sourcing cadres from this group.

To develop cadres from the group of reputable and core individuals in ethnic minority communities, it is necessary to strengthen advocacy efforts to encourage these respected persons to participate in carrying out grassroots political tasks, motivate them to join the Party and assign and utilize them in some positions within grassroots Party and government agencies.

These solutions ensure the quality of education and training and contribute to building a high-quality grassroots cadre team of ethnic minorities with vision, dedication, capacity, and motivation to implement the Party's ethnic policies in the Western region of Nghe An province.

4. Conclusion

Cadres are the decisive factor in the success or failure of a revolution, and personnel work is the “key” element in building the Party and the political system. Improving the quality of the cadre force in general, especially grassroots cadres from ethnic minority groups requires a cautious, scientific, democratic, and strategic approach. This is a top priority for the Western region of Nghe An province. Therefore, planning and developing a high-quality and effective pool of grassroots cadres from ethnic minority communities will enable them to actively contribute to the socio-economic development of ethnic minorities and mountainous areas. This effort not only

benefits ethnic minorities but also contributes to building a just, sustainable, and harmonious society.

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