

**GRASS-ROOTS GOVERNANCE
IN SHANGHAI**

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Executive Summary

1. Shanghai was one of the earliest pilots in community building in the 1990s and has since continued to search for ways to innovate grass-roots governance. In January 2015, it announced a plan to further improve its governing capacity at the grass-roots level.
2. In Shanghai as in other cities, grass-roots governance encompasses three areas: party building, community building and community management.
3. Shanghai's party building features the penetration of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) into the grass-roots, private enterprises and social organisations.
4. Community building has evolved from providing relief and assistance to the needy to nurturing and controlling social organisations in the delivery of customised and professional services to community residents.
5. Community management takes the form of 'grid management' (网格化管理) and 'grand coordination' (大联动) in Shanghai for better coordination and information sharing among stakeholders in social management.
6. The new initiatives announced in early 2015 aim to transfer more services, resources and power downward to strengthen grass-roots governance.
7. Shanghai will provide better incentives to attract younger and more competent candidates to the posts of party secretary in grass-roots party branches, and higher wages and better career development opportunities for social workers.
8. Large cities that place tremendous emphasis on political and social stability are likely to follow Shanghai in expending efforts and resources to stabilise the grass-roots.

9. However, Shanghai has achieved at best mixed results so far. Statistical data show that it is facing an uphill battle in meeting social challenges and containing protests at the grass-roots level.
10. Despite all the challenges and problems, to the ruling CCP, there is no viable alternative to the current approach of using party building to drive community building and community management. The CCP is still seen as the only force that can hold society together.