Over the past decade, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has built one of the most elaborate governance-training export systems in the world. What often appears as scattered party exchanges, study tours, and ideological seminars is in fact a highly coordinated enterprise, an ecosystem of institutions, programs, and narrative instruments that together form the global extension of an increasingly outward-facing political party. The CPC’s party diplomacy has, in recent years, also taken on a far more ambitious task: systematically transmitting China’s governance experience to ruling and major parties across the Global South.

Carefully managed bilateral contacts have now gradually evolved into a multi-channel configuration linking party organs, provincial authorities, party schools, think tanks and even overseas institutions into a single, coherent operational grid. By 2025, this strategy will have matured into a large coordination framework in which centrally-led design and whole-party participation all converge to advance its governance programme abroad.

A System with Many Doors but One Logic

The CPC today manages relations with hundreds of political parties across over 160 countries, but its real influence lies in how it uses these ties to host high-level delegations in Beijing. In the past decade, the Party has initiated short research classes and study groups, while also signing multi-year cooperation plans that have gradually evolved into recurring training programs. These sessions have been designed to familiarise foreign party elites with the CPC’s governing logic, its organisational discipline, and its cadre management practices.

One strand of this system also operates through the Party’s high-level political exchanges. When foreign party delegations arrive in Beijing, they are not received by mid-level protocol officers but by prominent ministers and vice ministers themselves. These meetings have primarily centered on governance experience exchange and cadre training cooperation. Their real function is to create a direct channel between the CPC’s political leadership and foreign party elites. Delegations are then given structured exposure to Party institutions, including Central Party School briefings, visits to organisational departments, and curated discussions on how the CPC trained, managed, and evaluated its own cadres. The face-to-face

nature of these engagements also makes a lasting impression. It signals political respect, anchors personal networks, and prepares the ground for deeper institutionalised training.

These political exchanges are then formalised through a growing architecture of bilateral MOUs and multi-year party cooperation plans. Over time, these agreements became more detailed. They specified not only the themes of cooperation but also the locations, institutions, and frequency of training. The CPC–Lao PDR Party Cooperation Plans clearly illustrated this trajectory. They designated specific provincial party schools as long-term training bases for Lao cadres, which effectively institutionalised a pipeline for recurring governance training. Similar agreements with political parties around the world have become a norm for CPC. These MOUs have subsequently turned what might otherwise have been one-off visits into a sustained system of political education, managed jointly but executed primarily through Chinese institutions.

A second channel pushing this logic further outward is the establishment of permanent overseas training centres. By effectively externalising Party schools built in cooperation with partner countries, Beijing is increasingly seeking to export its governance model abroad. The most prominent example of such a strategy is the Nyerere Leadership School (NLS) in Tanzania. The Six Sister Parties jointly operated it with Chinese political and material backing. It was constructed between 2018 and 2022 by a Chinese state-linked firm and inaugurated with congratulatory messages from Xi Jinping.

Perhaps the most consequential development of such a strategy is the outward-facing reform of the CPC's domestic cadre-training apparatus. The 2023–2027 National Cadre Education and Training Plan, for instance, explicitly mandates international training. The rules require party schools and cadre academies to develop foreign-language materials, deploy instructors overseas, and host international classes alongside their domestic ones. Foreign cadres now received versions of the duplicate content taught to Chinese officials. More than half of these modules now devote their instructional hours to Xi Jinping Thought, organisational discipline, and party-state governance.

This has nonetheless created a standardised pedagogical framework for exporting CPC governance. It has also ensured ideological coherence across all channels. Taken together, this ecosystem has invariably transformed governance training from episodic exchange into a sustained export of governance models. It has diffused the CPC’s understanding of organisational discipline, party-led development, and state-party integration into the institutional imagination of ruling parties across the Global South. Whether these parties adopted the CPC model wholesale is beside the point. The architecture offers a set of governance templates, ideological vocabularies, and institutional routines that foreign elites can selectively internalise.

In this sense, China’s governance-training diplomacy is not simply a soft-power programme. It is a structural projection of political expertise, marking the emergence of the CPC not only as a governing party with domestic authority but also as an international governance actor capable of shaping how other political organisations define competence, legitimacy, and modernisation.