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Collaborative Governance and Local Recruitment Policy in a Mining-Dependent Region: A Case Study of West Sumbawa, Indonesia

Inka Nusamuda Pratama[1]*, Azwar Subandi[2], Lalu Sopan Tirta Kusuma[3]
[1,2,3] Department of Government Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
Corresponding Author
E-mail: inka.nusamuda@ummat.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Large-scale mining can generate regional growth, yet whether residents gain access to mining employment depends on how local governments, companies, training providers, and communities govern skills development and recruitment. This article examines the configuration of actors, the allocation of decision-making authority, and the implementation tensions in local workforce governance around the Batu Hijau mine operated by PT Amman Mineral Nusa Tenggara (AMNT) in West Sumbawa Regency, Indonesia. Using a qualitative single embedded case study, the research combined semi-structured interviews with government, company, academic, and community informants with policy documents, program documents, and official statistics, analyzed through the framework method with NVivo 12 Plus. The findings show, first, that decisions on training design, funding, and hiring are concentrated among the regency government, AMNT, and its training partners, while documentary evidence of community influence over program decisions is limited. Second, the regency's one-stop recruitment policy is the main instrument for protecting local workers but creates friction with contractors' demand for rapid hiring. Third, a history of layoffs and unfulfilled corporate commitments shapes trust and participation in current collaboration. The study contributes to collaborative governance scholarship by showing how local-protection regulation and corporate vocational partnerships interact in a mining-dependent district, where regulatory control of recruitment can substitute for trust. Effects on job placement, retention, household income, and poverty were not evaluated; a theory of change is proposed to guide future outcome evaluation.

Keywords: Vocational Partnerships; Regency Government; Workforce Protection; Skills Development; Extractive Industries; Theory of Change

1. INTRODUCTION

Large-scale mining operations such as the Batu Hijau copper–gold mine operated by PT Amman Mineral Nusa Tenggara (AMNT) can stimulate regional economies through employment, procurement, and public revenue. However, the presence of a large company does not automatically translate into employment for residents of surrounding villages. Earlier research on West Sumbawa Regency identified a persistent gap between job creation in the mining-led economy and the skills of the local workforce, together with competition from migrant workers, the limited capacity of public vocational training centers (Balai Latihan Kerja, BLK), and low corporate compliance with labor regulations (Nursan et al., 2021). These conditions make the governance of skills development and recruitment, rather than the volume of investment alone, a central question for local government.

Indonesia's skills policies increasingly emphasize the role of local institutions. A joint review of employment and skills strategies in Indonesia highlights wide disparities in labor-market and skills outcomes across provinces and recommends strengthening the local institutions that manage and deliver employment and skills policies (OECD & ADB, 2020). In West Sumbawa, AMNT has recently initiated a heavy-equipment mechanic scholarship delivered with UT School and the BLKs of West Sumbawa and Sumbawa Regencies (AMMAN, 2026), while the regency government enforces a one-stop recruitment policy intended to protect local workers. How these two instruments, a corporate-led vocational partnership and a government-led recruitment regulation, are coordinated, who holds decision-making authority within them, and how communities participate remain insufficiently documented.

Indonesian studies of labor absorption have mostly examined macro-level determinants such as industrial investment, number of firms, minimum wages, output, and education, typically through regression analysis of provincial or district data (Pudjaningrum & Athoillah, 2025; Rizqi et al., 2022; Shaffa & Abdullah, 2023). Research on skill upgrading similarly focuses on firm-level demand for skilled labor (Matsuura & Saito, 2023; Moncada et al., 2025), while legal analyses address the causes of the low absorption of local workers (Herlambang et al., 2024). Collaborative-governance research in Indonesia has examined mandated collaboration in social policy and multi-actor arrangements for poverty reduction (Afandi et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2023). What these strands have not yet explained is how, in a mining-dependent district, the relationship among the local government, a dominant company and its contractors, training providers, and communities is organized around two linked decisions: who is trained and who is hired. In particular, the division of authority over training design, the accountability of recruitment channels, and the tension between protecting local workers and meeting industry's demand for timely, qualified labor have received little empirical attention.

This article therefore treats "co-designed skill hubs", that is, training arrangements whose content and eligibility rules are jointly decided by industry, local government, and communities, as a normative governance proposition rather than as an established intervention. The study asks three questions: (1) how actors and decision-making authority are configured in skills development and recruitment around the AMNT mine; (2) to what extent current arrangements approximate co-design, particularly regarding community influence; and (3) which coordination problems arise between skills development and recruitment regulation.

The contribution of the study is threefold. Empirically, it documents the configuration of actors and decision rights in local workforce governance around a major mine. Conceptually, it positions collaborative governance as the primary lens, with human capital as the skills mechanism and labor-market structure as a boundary condition. Theoretically, it shows how a history of layoffs and unmet corporate commitments operates as a starting condition that shapes trust and participation, and how regulatory control of recruitment

may substitute for trust where corporate credibility is low. The study does not evaluate employment or poverty outcomes; instead, it derives a theory of change that specifies the assumptions such an evaluation would need to test.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Collaborative Governance as the Primary Framework

Collaborative governance refers to arrangements in which public agencies engage non-state stakeholders in a collective, formal, consensus-oriented decision-making process to make or implement public policy (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The collaborative governance model identifies starting conditions, namely power and resource imbalances, incentives to participate, and a prehistory of cooperation or conflict, together with institutional design, facilitative leadership, and a collaborative process built on dialogue, trust-building, commitment, and shared understanding (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This model has been extended into an integrative framework in which principled engagement, shared motivation, and the capacity for joint action generate collaborative actions whose outcomes must be assessed separately (Emerson et al., 2012). Cross-sector collaborations are also shaped by their initial conditions, governance structures, and accountability arrangements, which must be designed deliberately rather than assumed (Bryson et al., 2015).

Inclusion is a design choice rather than a by-product of collaboration: which stakeholders are brought in, and how actively their inclusion is managed, strongly influences collaborative outcomes (Ansell et al., 2020). Indonesian studies likewise show that collaboration does not emerge automatically even when formally mandated, because relationships among actors, interests, coordination, and institutional conditions shape the process (Afandi et al., 2023), and that multi-actor arrangements for poverty reduction depend on how roles are distributed among government, business, academia, community, and media (Pratama et al., 2023). Applied to local workforce governance, the framework directs attention to three questions: how authority over training and recruitment is distributed, how communities influence decisions, and how accountability for recruitment is secured.

2.2 Human Capital and Capabilities as the Skills Mechanism

Human capital theory treats education and training as investments that raise individual productivity and, consequently, employment and earnings (Becker, 1962). The capability approach shifts the evaluative focus from productivity to the expansion of people's real opportunities to achieve the functionings they value (Robeyns, 2005). Traces this shift in thinking about education from a productivity-oriented human capital perspective toward a human capabilities perspective. The distinction matters for this case: a training program may raise the productivity of those admitted, which is a human capital outcome, without widening access for those excluded by cost, education, distance, or social networks, which is a capability outcome. In the framework of this study, human capital is the mechanism through which collaborative decisions are expected to affect employability,

whereas the capability approach provides the criterion for judging whether access is inclusive.

Experimental evidence calls for caution in transferring training effects across contexts. In a systematic review of randomized evaluations of youth skills-training programs in low- and middle-income countries, access to training was found to increase employment by about 5% and earnings by about 11% (Agarwal & Mani, 2025); these are relative changes compared with control groups rather than percentage-point changes. The effects were driven by classroom-based vocational training, whereas apprenticeship-only programs and programs combining vocational training with apprenticeships showed effects not significantly different from zero. Because the AMNT program combines classroom training with on-the-job training in a capital-intensive mining setting, these estimates cannot serve as evidence of its effectiveness; they show only that training effects are heterogeneous and depend on program design.

2.3 Skill Mismatch and Labor-Market Structure as Boundary Conditions

Skill mismatch denotes the gap between the skills workers possess and those demanded by employers; it may take the form of skill shortages, skill gaps, over- or under-qualification, or field-of-study mismatch (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021). Using Colombian data, a higher share of mismatched workers was found to be associated with greater labor turnover and higher informality, but not with a significant change in unemployment (Flórez & Gómez, 2024). A literature review concludes that bridging the gap requires industry involvement in curriculum design and training delivery (Kebede et al., 2024). In a mining-dependent district, mismatch interacts with the structure of the labor market: hiring is largely conducted by contractors, demand fluctuates with construction phases and commodity cycles, and migrant workers compete for the same positions (Nursan et al., 2021). These structural features are therefore treated as boundary conditions that limit what any skills intervention can achieve, irrespective of the quality of collaboration.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Taken together, the three perspectives play distinct roles in this study (Figure 1). Collaborative governance explains how decisions on training and recruitment are made and by whom; human capital specifies how training is expected to affect employability, while the capability approach defines inclusiveness as expanded access rather than productivity alone; and labor-market structure sets the conditions under which these mechanisms can or cannot operate.

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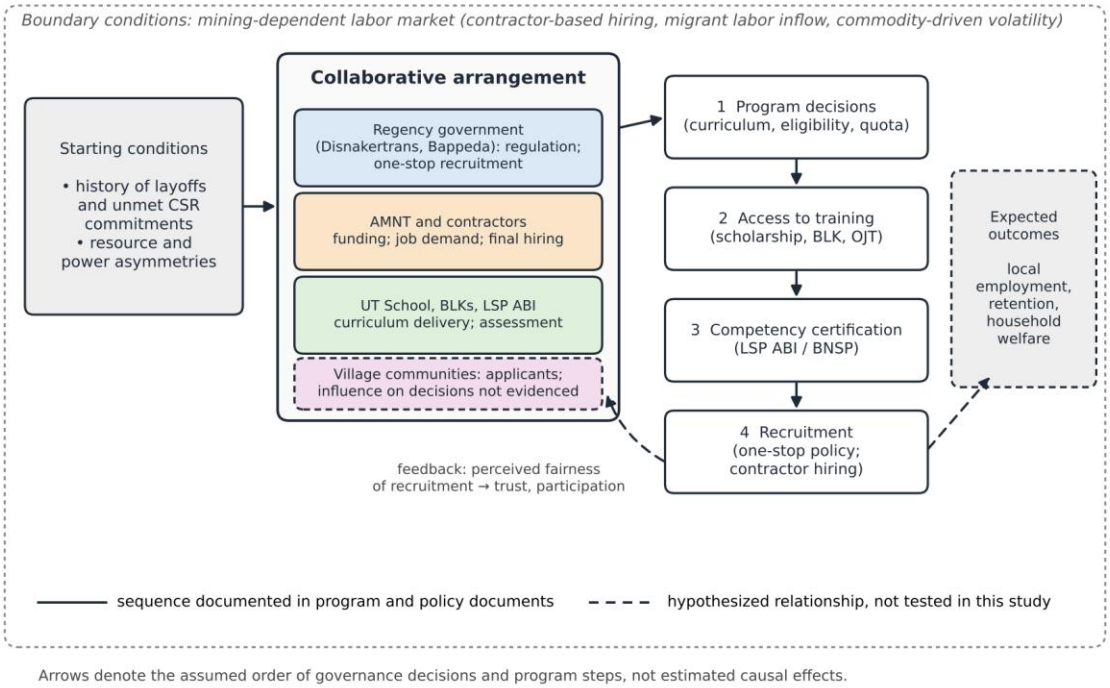

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Governance Sequence of Local Workforce Skills Development and Recruitment

Source: Developed by the authors from Ansell & Gash Emerson

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study; the research design is presented separately in Figure 2. The framework specifies the order in which governance decisions are expected to translate into labor-market outcomes. Starting conditions, notably the history of layoffs and unfulfilled corporate commitments and the asymmetries of resources and power among actors, shape the collaborative arrangement. Within that arrangement, actors hold different decision rights: the regency government, through the Manpower and Transmigration Office (Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi, Disnakertrans) and the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), holds regulatory authority, including the one-stop recruitment policy; AMNT and its contractors provide funding, define job demand, and make final hiring decisions; UT School, the BLKs, and the professional certification body deliver curricula and assess competence; and village communities participate mainly as applicants, with their influence over program decisions treated as an empirical question. The mechanism proceeds through four steps: (1) program decisions on curriculum, eligibility, and quotas; (2) access to training; (3) competency certification; and (4) recruitment.

Solid arrows denote sequences documented in program and policy documents, whereas dashed arrows denote relationships that are hypothesized but not tested in this study, namely the effects of recruitment on employment, retention, and household welfare, and the feedback from the perceived fairness of recruitment to trust and participation. The arrangement operates within boundary conditions set by a mining-dependent labor market

characterized by contractor-based hiring, inflows of migrant labor, and commodity-driven volatility. This framework separates what the study can observe, namely actor configurations, decision rules, and implementation tensions, from outcomes it cannot yet observe, namely employment, retention, and poverty.

3. METHOD

This study is qualitative research using a single embedded case study design, which is suited to examining a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011; Mohajan, 2018). The case is defined as the governance of local workforce skills development and recruitment around the Batu Hijau mine in West Sumbawa Regency. The unit of analysis is the multi-actor arrangement linking the regency government, AMNT and its contractors, training providers, and village communities. Two embedded units were examined: (a) the one-stop recruitment policy administered by Disnakertrans and (b) the heavy-equipment mechanic scholarship delivered by AMNT, UT School, and the BLKs. The documentary period covers 2020–2026, and field data were collected in 2026.

The study adopts an interpretivist approach that treats actors' accounts as situated interpretations of institutional arrangements rather than as neutral reports of fact. Collaborative governance theory was used as a sensitizing framework that guided, but did not predetermine, the analysis. West Sumbawa Regency was selected purposively as an extreme case of mining dependence, in which the mining and quarrying sector accounts for most regional output. Within the regency, Belo Village (Jereweh District) and Sekongkang Bawah Village (Sekongkang District) were selected because they are among the settlements closest to the mine and were affected by the workforce reductions that accompanied the change of ownership, which makes them information-rich sites for examining trust and participation. The study uses primary and secondary data. Primary data consist of semi-structured interviews with key informants. Secondary data consist of regional and regent regulations on local workforce placement, program documents and press releases of AMNT, statistical publications of Statistics Indonesia Badan Pusat Statistik, and news reports.

Informants were selected purposively on the basis of their direct involvement in training, certification, or recruitment decisions or their implementation, or, for community informants, their residence in the study villages and experience of local recruitment. Table 1 summarizes the informant groups and the codes used to anonymize them. Sample adequacy was judged by information power, given the narrow aim of the study, the specificity of the informants, and the use of established theory (Malterud et al., 2016). Training providers, namely the BLKs and UT School, were examined through program documents.

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Group	Institution or role	Code
Regency government	Manpower and Transmigration Office (Disnakertrans); Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda)	G
Company	AMNT CSR/Social Impact function; contractor representatives	C
Academics	Universities in West Nusa Tenggara	A
Community	Village leaders, former mine workers, and job seekers in Belo and Sekongkang Bawah Villages	M

Table 1. Informant Groups

Source: Fieldwork by the authors (2026)

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. Interviews explored informants' roles, decision-making procedures in training and recruitment, relationships with other actors, and their assessment of local workforce policies. Interviews were recorded with informants' consent or documented through detailed field notes and were then transcribed for coding. All informants received an explanation of the study's purpose and participated voluntarily; identities are reported only through group codes, and details that could identify individuals in small institutions were removed. Documentation covered regulations, program documents, statistical publications, and news reports. Online documents were captured with NCapture, a browser extension developed by QSR International for importing web content into NVivo 12 Plus. The authors are academics at a university in Mataram, outside the study regency, with no contractual relationship with AMNT or the regency government.

Data were analyzed using the framework method (Gale et al., 2013) in five stages (Figure 2). First, the authors familiarized themselves with transcripts and documents and wrote analytic memos. Second, an initial codebook was built deductively from the collaborative governance framework (starting conditions, institutional design, decision authority, trust, and accountability) and expanded inductively with codes emerging from the data, such as "one-stop policy friction" and "layoff memory". Third, the codebook was revised iteratively through joint coding and discussion among the three authors, and merged or split codes were recorded in dated codebook versions. Fourth, coded material was charted into an actor–theme matrix (Table 4), and accounts that contradicted the dominant pattern were deliberately sought and reported. Fifth, the patterns were interpreted against the conceptual framework.

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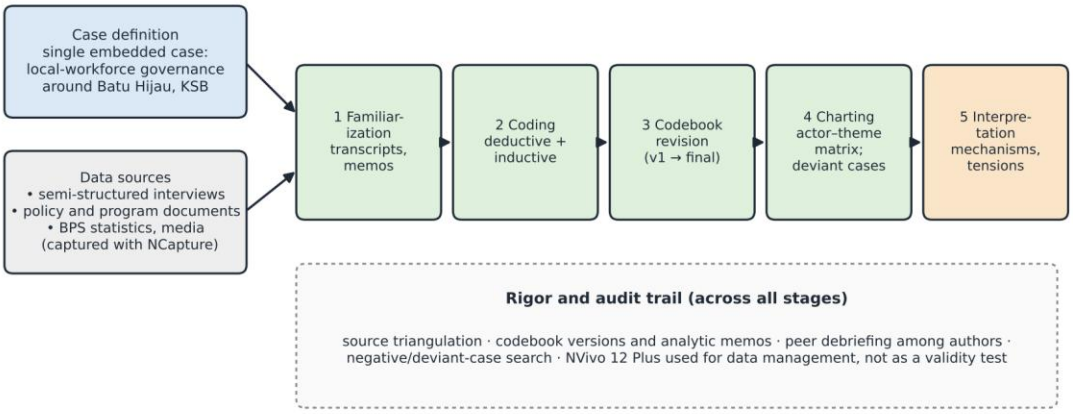

Figure 2. Research Design and Analytical Workflow
Source: Developed by the authors (2026)

NVivo 12 Plus was used to store, code, query, and retrieve the data, as in earlier Indonesian governance research (Salahudin et al., 2020); the software supports data management and does not by itself establish the validity of findings. Credibility was pursued through triangulation across informant groups and between interview and documentary sources, and through peer debriefing among the authors. An audit trail consisting of the interview guide, dated codebook versions, analytic memos, and the NVivo 12 Plus project file is retained by the corresponding author. Reporting was guided by the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (Tong et al., 2007).

4. RESULT

4.1 Socio-Economic Context of West Sumbawa Regency

The presence of a large-scale mining industry in West Sumbawa Regency (Kabupaten Sumbawa Barat, KSB), West Nusa Tenggara Province, has reshaped the regional economy. Copper and gold extraction at Batu Hijau, initially operated by PT Newmont Nusa Tenggara and, following the change of ownership in 2016, by AMNT, has made regional output highly dependent on a single sector. According to BPS West Sumbawa Regency, Category B (mining and quarrying) of the Indonesian Standard Industrial Classification accounted for up to 81.89% of the regency's gross regional domestic product (GRDP) during 2017–2021, a share that includes other mining and quarrying activities and not only AMNT (Sarjono, 2022). This concentration matters for governance in three ways: it exposes regency finances, which rely substantially on natural-resource revenue-sharing transfers, to commodity cycles; it gives the dominant company and its contractors considerable leverage over the local labor market; and it focuses the regency's labor-governance agenda on access to mining jobs. A high GRDP share does not, however, indicate how much of the value added reaches local households. The economic weight of the extractive sector has not been matched by a proportional reduction

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in poverty. The percentage of poor people declined only gradually, while the poverty line, defined as the minimum monthly per capita expenditure required to meet basic food and non-food needs, rose steadily **(Table 2).**

Year	Poor population (%)	Poverty line (IDR/person/month)	OUR (%)	LFPR (%)	Economic growth (%)	HDI (points)
2020	13.34	489,863	5.50	69.73	28.79	73.34
2021	13.54	499,013	5.52	71.02	−0.33	73.54
2022	13.02	518,619	4.56	75.76	24.14	74.34
2023	12.95	565,599	3.54	70.87	−10.37	74.84
2024	12.23	611,142	3.10	75.66	12.01	75.52
2025	10.98	629,139	–	–	–	–

Notes: OUR = open unemployment rate (Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka), unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force; LFPR = labor force participation rate (Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja), the labor force as a percentage of the working-age population; HDI = Human Development Index (Indeks Pembangunan Manusia); – = not yet published. Poverty data refer to the March National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas); OUR and LFPR refer to the August National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas); economic growth is based on GRDP at constant 2010 prices.

Table 2. Selected Socio-Economic Indicators of West Sumbawa Regency, 2020–2025
Source: (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Sumbawa Barat, 2025) for 2020–2024; (Databoks, 2026) for 2025

Between 2020 and 2025, the nominal poverty line rose from IDR 489,863 to IDR 629,139 per person per month, an increase of 28.4%. Over the same period, the percentage of poor people fell from 13.54% in 2021, when it rose temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, to 10.98% in 2025, a decline of 2.56 percentage points or about 19% in relative terms. These trends are presented as context only. A rising poverty line reflects changes in the cost of the basic-needs basket and does not by itself identify a particular source of inflation, and a falling headcount ratio does not show whether the poverty gap narrowed, which would require the poverty gap index (P1) and the poverty severity index (P2). Likewise, the data do not permit attribution of the decline to social safety-net programs or to mining employment.

The open unemployment rate declined from 5.52% in 2021 to 3.10% in 2024, while the labor force participation rate fluctuated between 69.73% and 75.76%. Lower aggregate unemployment is consistent with expanding employment opportunities, but these indicators do not distinguish between local and migrant workers, between formal and informal jobs, or between mining and non-mining employment. They therefore cannot show that local labor absorption is inclusive, which is why the governance of recruitment examined in the following sections matters. Annual economic growth was highly volatile, ranging from 28.79% in 2020 to −10.37% in 2023 and 12.01% in 2024, a pattern typical of output driven by a single extractive operation, whereas the HDI rose steadily from 73.34 to 75.52 over the same period.

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4.2 The Multi-Stakeholder Vocational Partnership

The capital- and technology-intensive nature of mining operations requires specialized and certified technical skills. Earlier research identified the low skills and education of local workers, insufficient BLK trainers, and inadequate training facilities as the main internal weaknesses of the local workforce in West Sumbawa (Nursan et al., 2021). Government and community informants in this study similarly described young residents without industry qualifications as confined to agriculture or informal work, a condition that has contributed to social tension over access to mining jobs.

The most developed current arrangement is the Batch I Basic Heavy Equipment Mechanic Scholarship Program, whose participants were sent off on 24 April 2026 (AMMAN, 2026). According to the program documents, AMNT acts as initiator and funder; UT School, under the Karya Bakti United Tractors Foundation, provides the curriculum and industry standards; and the BLKs of the Manpower and Transmigration Offices of West Sumbawa and Sumbawa Regencies serve as the local training base, with AMNT financing the renovation of BLK buildings and equipment. The program documents present the regency governments, AMNT, and UT School as the parties that designed the program and contain no record of community representatives participating in curriculum or eligibility decisions. Community involvement therefore appears limited to the role of applicants. The program is designed to last approximately one year and comprises four sequential phases **(Figure 3).**

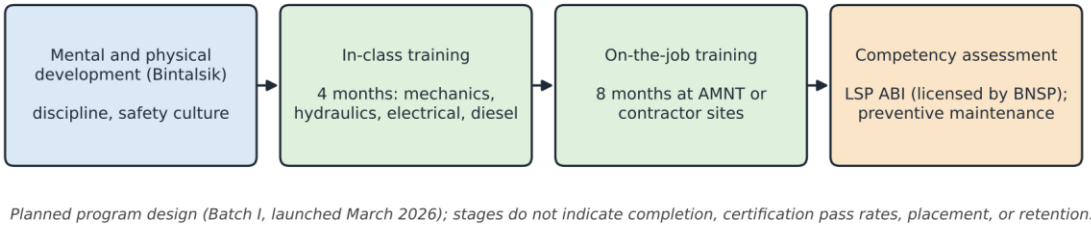

Figure 3. Planned Stages of the Heavy-Equipment Mechanic Training Program (Program Design)
Source: Compiled by the authors from (AMMAN, 2026)

Figure 3 depicts the program as designed and does not constitute evidence of its results. The first phase, mental and physical development (Bintalsik), focuses on discipline, work resilience, integrity, and a safety culture appropriate to high-risk mining environments. Participants then enter a four-month in-class phase covering heavy-equipment mechanics, hydraulic systems, electrical systems, and diesel engines, followed by an eight-month on-the-job training phase at the operational sites of AMNT or its contractors under the supervision of senior practitioners. The final phase is a competency assessment in preventive maintenance. In Indonesia's certification system, the National Professional Certification Agency (Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi, BNSP) licenses professional certification bodies (Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi, LSP); the assessment is

conducted by the Indonesian Heavy Equipment Professional Certification Institute (LSP ABI), and successful candidates receive a BNSP-recognized competency certificate. Because Batch I began in April 2026 and is scheduled to run until approximately April 2027, data on completion, certification pass rates, job placement, and retention were not yet available at the time of the study. Certification should not be equated with placement or retention: a certificate attests to competence, whereas hiring remains at the discretion of AMNT and its contractors and is subject to the one-stop recruitment policy discussed below.

A second instrument targets secondary education. The 2026 AMMAN Flagship Vocational High School (SMK Unggulan) Scholarship funds junior high school graduates from West Sumbawa and Sumbawa Regencies to attend partner vocational high schools; eligibility requires proof of local residence through the family card (Kartu Keluarga), an age limit, and physical and mental health standards (AMMAN, 2026). The residence requirement operationalizes local protection at the point of entry to training, paralleling the logic of the one-stop recruitment policy at the point of hiring. The scholarship is organized into three sector clusters, each linked to designated partner vocational schools **(Table 3).**

Sector cluster	Fields of study	Partner vocational schools	Scholarship entitlements
Manufacturing and industrial engineering	Heavy equipment engineering, mechanical engineering, welding engineering, industrial automation engineering, electrical power engineering, electronic engineering	SMK Raden Umar Said, SMK Wisudha Karya, SMK PGRI 1, SMK PGRI 2, SMK NU Ma'arif, SMK Brantas Karangkates	Full tuition waiver, dormitory accommodation, return transportation, daily allowance, BPJS health insurance, professional certification exam fees
Creative and digital industries	2D animation, 3D animation, visual communication design, graphic engineering	SMK Raden Umar Said, SMK Wisudha Karya	Laptop or design equipment, portfolio project costs, international digital industry certification
Services, tourism, and empowerment	Fashion design, beauty and spa, hospitality, culinary arts	SMK NU Banat, SMK Brantas Karangkates	Personal practice tools, internship in the five-star hotel industry, BNSP certification

Table 3. Fields of Study, Partner Schools, and Scholarship Entitlements

Source: Compiled by the authors from (AMMAN, 2026)

Read through the capability perspective, the entitlements in Table 3, namely tuition waivers, dormitory accommodation, transport, daily allowances, health insurance, and certification fees, primarily remove the direct and indirect costs of participation and therefore address access rather than productivity. Whether they widen access for low-income households, reduce skill mismatch, or improve subsequent employment cannot be determined from program documents; answering these questions requires data on the socio-economic profile of applicants and recipients and on graduates' subsequent employment.

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4.3 Actor Configuration, Decision Authority, and Perceptions

This section examines how informants perceive the arrangement and which institutional mechanisms they associate with access to training and employment; it does not test the effectiveness of the program. Interview transcripts from the regency government, AMNT's CSR/Social Impact function and contractors, academics, and community leaders in Belo and Sekongkang Bawah Villages were coded as described in Section 3.6. Figure 4 summarizes the share of coded references assigned to the principal themes.

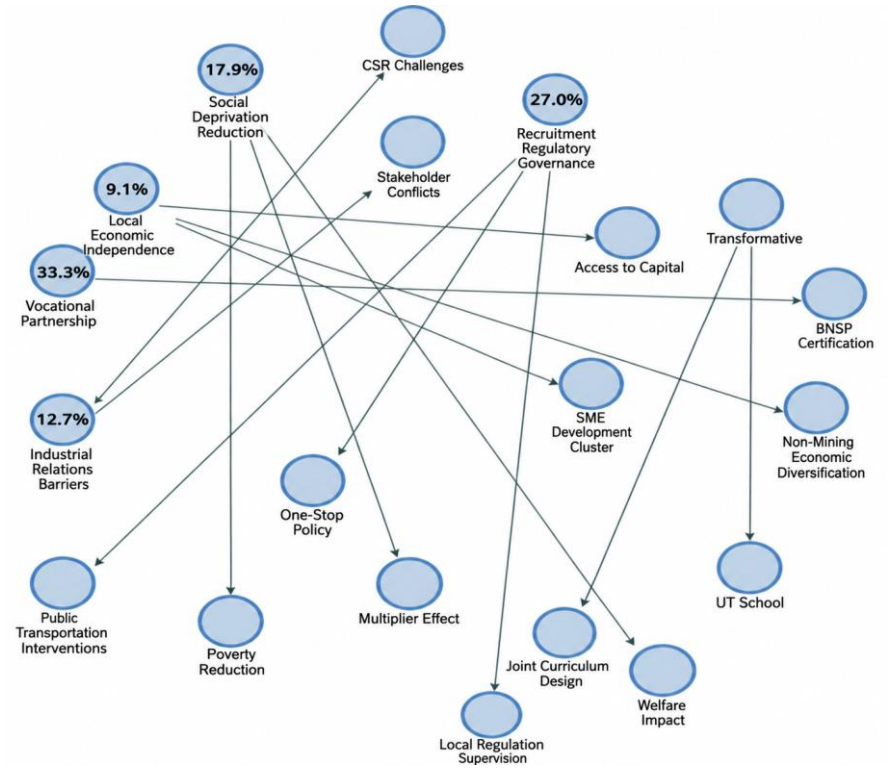

Figure 4. Distribution of Coded References Across Principal Themes
Source: NVivo 12 Plus project of the authors (2026)

The percentages in **Figure 4** represent the proportion of coded references assigned to each parent theme across all sources: vocational partnership (33.3%), recruitment regulatory governance (27.0%), social deprivation reduction (17.9%), industrial relations barriers (12.7%), and local economic independence (9.1%). They indicate how often informants and documents addressed each theme; they are not weights, effect sizes, or measures of causal importance. The connecting lines show conceptual relations between parent themes and sub-themes defined during coding, not statistical dependencies. Table 4 shows which actor groups foregrounded each theme, the dominant account, and the divergent evidence.

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Theme	Share of coded references	Actor groups foregrounding the theme	Dominant account	Divergent evidence
Vocational partnership	33.3%	Government (G); company (C)	The BLK–AMNT–UT School partnership is presented as the main route to local competitiveness and as a long-term human-resource investment.	Program documents contain no record of a community role in curriculum or eligibility decisions.
Recruitment regulatory governance	27.0%	Government (G); company and contractors (C); community (M)	The one-stop policy is defended as protection against illegal recruitment, fraudulent job postings, and the unregulated inflow of outside labor.	Contractors describe the selection process as slow and bureaucratic; the regional legislature and labor unions question Disnakertrans oversight of contractor layoffs.
Social deprivation reduction	17.9%	Government (G); company (C)	Training and recruitment are justified by their expected contribution to household welfare.	No outcome data on placement, income, or poverty are yet available.
Industrial relations barriers	12.7%	Community (M); academics (A)	Memory of the layoffs that followed the change of ownership and of unmet corporate commitments shapes trust in current programs.	Company accounts frame workforce reductions as efficiency measures.
Local economic independence	9.1%	Company (C); community (M)	CSR-supported micro, small, and medium enterprises are cited as alternative livelihoods.	These enterprises depend on the consumption of mining workers and are vulnerable to any contraction of mining activity.

Table 4. Actor–Theme Matrix
Source: Analysis of interview and documentary data by the authors (2026)

Two patterns stand out. First, the prominence of vocational partnership and recruitment governance indicates that informants frame access to mining employment as a problem of who is trained and who controls hiring rather than of job availability alone. Second, themes concerning welfare and poverty were raised mainly as expectations and justifications, particularly by government and company informants, rather than as observed results.

4.4 Recruitment Governance and the Legacy of Past Conflict

Although vocational partnerships are expected to widen access to mining employment, informants' accounts and documents reveal structural barriers and regulatory tensions. These tensions center on the one-stop recruitment policy administered by the integrated team of the West Sumbawa Disnakertrans. The policy is grounded in regional and regent regulations on local workforce placement and aims to protect the rights of local workers and secure employment for communities surrounding the mine. Government informants emphasized that all recruitment, particularly for unskilled positions, must pass through the regency's single portal in order to curb illegal recruitment, fraudulent job

postings using AMNT's name, and the uncoordinated inflow of workers from outside the region, and the regency has warned that subcontractors violating the policy face administrative sanctions.

Implementation of the one-stop policy, however, frequently clashes with the operational dynamics of the private sector. Mining subcontractors complain that document selection at the agency level is slow and bureaucratic and inconsistent with field needs that require rapid labor mobilization during certain construction phases. The West Sumbawa Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and local labor unions have repeatedly criticized unilateral layoffs of local workers by subcontractors, leading to accusations that the labor agency lacks industrial oversight.

These tensions have historical roots. Community informants in Belo and Sekongkang Bawah Villages recalled that, following the change of ownership from PT Newmont Nusa Tenggara to AMNT in 2016, efficiency measures led to the dismissal of local former Newmont workers. They associated these job losses with the non-fulfilment of earlier corporate commitments, including a promised renovation of houses for affected low-income families. These accounts continue to shape how community informants judge current training and recruitment initiatives.

Non-mining economic empowerment efforts funded through AMNT's corporate social responsibility (CSR) program also continue to face challenges in achieving independence. Most local micro, small, and medium enterprises around the industrial area remain constrained by limited access to capital, minimal adoption of information technology, and inadequate human resource management. Local success stories exist, such as the egg-laying chicken program in Benete Village, where the average income of assisted farmers was reported to have increased from IDR 48,640,417 before the CSR intervention to IDR 101,491,250 after implementation, as well as palm sugar products in Tongo Village and Mantar weaving crafts. Yet these businesses remain fragile because their markets depend on the purchasing power of the mining workforce in West Sumbawa and would be threatened by any contraction of mining activity.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Decision Authority and the Limits of Co-Design

The findings show an asymmetrical configuration: the regency government holds regulatory authority over recruitment, AMNT and its contractors hold funding and hiring authority, and training providers deliver programs, while communities participate mainly as applicants. On current evidence, the arrangement is therefore better described as a multi-stakeholder vocational partnership than as a co-designed skill hub. This finding is consistent with the argument that inclusion in collaborative governance must be actively designed and managed rather than assumed (Ansell et al., 2020), and with Indonesian evidence that formally mandated collaboration does not by itself produce shared decision-making (Afandi et al., 2023). It also refines earlier analyses of West Sumbawa that

recommended strengthening BLK capacity and skills training (Nursan et al., 2021): the present case shows that such capacity can be strengthened through corporate investment without any corresponding change in who decides what is taught and who is eligible.

5.2 Coordination Between Skills Development and Recruitment

The second finding concerns the interface between training and hiring. Skills development is governed through a corporate-led partnership, whereas recruitment is governed through a government-led regulation, and no joint forum reconciles the two. This divided accountability means that the regency is accountable for whom contractors hire, while contractors remain accountable to AMNT for timely delivery. The literature on vocational education emphasizes industry involvement in curriculum design (Kebede et al., 2024), but this case suggests that industry involvement in training is insufficient when the recruitment channel is governed separately. Moreover, the evidence that skill mismatch is associated mainly with turnover and informality rather than unemployment (Flórez & Gómez, 2024), and that combined classroom and apprenticeship programs have shown weaker effects than classroom-only training (Agarwal & Mani, 2025), cautions against assuming that certification will translate into stable local employment without coordinated recruitment rules.

5.3 Prehistory of Conflict, Trust, and Regulation as a Substitute for Trust

From a collaborative governance perspective, the history of layoffs and unmet commitments constitutes a prehistory of conflict that lowers initial trust and raises the perceived cost of participation (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Research on mining communities shows that procedural fairness and the quality of contact between company and community are central to trust and to community acceptance of mining (Moffat & Zhang, 2014), while critical perspectives warn that corporate engagement can be oriented toward reducing opposition rather than sharing decision-making power (Owen & Kemp, 2013). The West Sumbawa case extends these insights: where a dominant company has a record of unmet commitments, community informants judge training and recruitment primarily in terms of fairness and the credibility of promises, and the one-stop policy gains local legitimacy as a safeguard against opaque contractor hiring despite its operational friction. Regulatory control of recruitment by the local government can thus function as a substitute for trust. The same control, however, concentrates authority in the bureaucracy and may crowd out direct community voice in program design, which is the main theoretical proposition of this study and warrants testing in other extractive regions.

5.4 Practical Implications and a Theory of Change

Aligning skills development with recruitment requires institutional design rather than additional training capacity alone. Three governance measures follow from the findings. First, a formal collaborative platform convened by the regency government, including AMNT, contractors, training providers, and elected village representatives,

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should hold a documented mandate over curriculum priorities, eligibility criteria, and quotas; such platforms can sustain multiple collaborative projects over time (Ansell & Gash, 2018). Second, competency certificates from the joint program should be recognized within the one-stop recruitment channel, with published service standards that address contractors' concerns about delays. Third, public reporting, disaggregated by village, sex, and household income, of applicants, participants, certification results, and placements would make both the company and the government accountable for outcomes.

Because the present evidence does not permit estimation of causal parameters, the expected pathway is expressed as a theory of change rather than as a quantitative model. A theory of change specifies how actions are expected to lead to outputs and outcomes, together with the assumptions on which each link depends (Mayne, 2015). Figure 5 presents the proposed pathway.

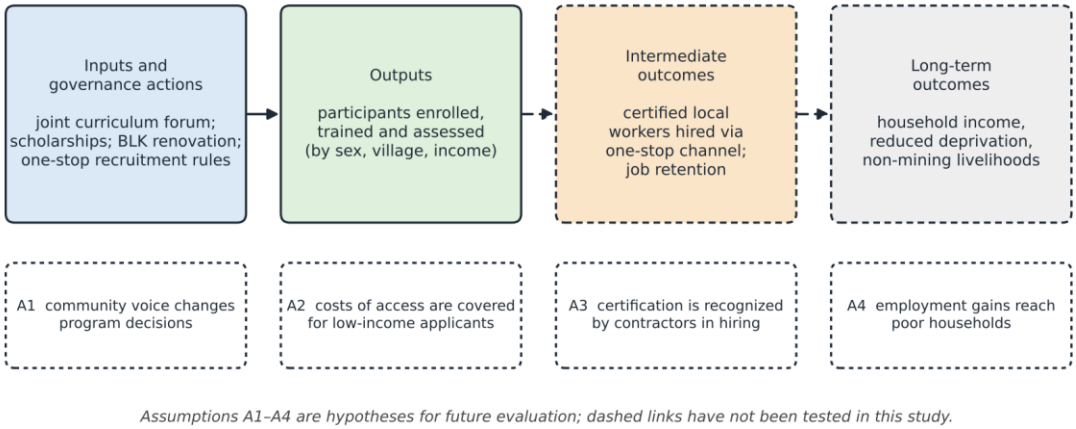

Figure 5. Theory of Change for Collaborative Local Workforce Governance (Proposed, Untested)
Source: Developed by the authors (2026)

The first two stages of Figure 5, governance actions and outputs, can be observed through program and administrative records; the subsequent links are hypotheses. Assumption A1 holds that community voice changes program decisions; this study found no documentary evidence that it currently does. Assumption A2 holds that scholarships and related support cover the direct and indirect costs of access for low-income applicants. Assumption A3 holds that contractors recognize the competency certificates when hiring through the one-stop channel; certification and placement are distinct indicators and should be measured separately. Assumption A4 holds that employment gains reach poor households rather than better-connected residents or migrants. Diversification toward non-mining livelihoods, including agriculture, MSMEs, the creative economy, and tourism, remains important for resilience in a mining-dependent district, but it lies outside the governance mechanism examined here and is treated as a complementary policy domain.

6. CONCLUSION

Conclusion. This study examined how local workforce skills development and recruitment are governed around the AMNT mine in West Sumbawa Regency. Three conclusions are supported by the evidence. First, the actor configuration is asymmetrical: decisions on training design, funding, and hiring are concentrated among the regency government, AMNT and its contractors, and training partners, while communities participate mainly as applicants, so the existing programs are better described as multi-stakeholder vocational partnerships than as co-designed skill hubs. Second, coordination problems arise at the interface between skills development and recruitment: the one-stop recruitment policy protects local workers and enjoys local legitimacy, but it generates friction with contractors' need for rapid labor mobilization, and its oversight of contractor layoffs has been contested. Third, the history of layoffs and unmet corporate commitments conditions trust, suggesting that regulatory control of recruitment may function as a substitute for trust where corporate credibility is low. The effects of these arrangements on job placement, retention, household income, and poverty were not evaluated in this study. Research Limitations. First, the study employs a qualitative single case study of the employment and community empowerment ecosystem surrounding PT AMNT; the findings reflect the social, institutional, and economic context of West Sumbawa Regency and cannot be directly generalized to other industrial or mining regions. Second, the analysis relies on actor perceptions, documents, and thematic coding; it does not longitudinally measure whether competency improvements translate into workforce absorption, increased income, or job sustainability, and the NVivo 12 Plus proportions represent thematic intensity rather than causal relationships. Third, training providers were examined only through program documents, and the heavy-equipment program had not completed its first cohort at the time of the study. Recommendations for Future Research. Future research should use longitudinal and mixed-methods designs to test the assumptions of the theory of change in Figure 5 by tracking participants from application and training through certification, job placement, and retention, using indicators such as certification pass rates, the proportion of participants securing employment, job tenure, changes in household income, and income diversification. Comparative studies across extractive regions could identify the conditions under which regulatory control of recruitment substitutes for, or erodes, trust in collaborative arrangements, and further research should examine the role of recruitment governance as the link between skill development and labor absorption.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in this study. The entire research process, data analysis, and manuscript preparation were conducted independently, and there are no financial, professional, or other interests that could influence the objectivity of the research or the interpretation of the findings.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Inka Nusamuda Pratama contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, and preparation of the original manuscript, as well as review and editing of the final manuscript, project administration, and funding acquisition.

Azwar Subandi contributed to conceptualization, field investigation, data curation, formal analysis, validation, and writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Lalu Sopan Tirta Kusuma contributed to methodological development, field investigation, data curation, validation, visualization, and critical review and editing of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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