

Village Government Strategy for Improving Workforce Quality in Citalanggeng Village, Karawang Regency

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ABSTRACT

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Rural communities near industrial growth centers can remain excluded from formal employment when local workforce development lacks adequate governance support. This study analyzes the Citalanggeng Village Government strategy for improving workforce quality and explains why its human resource development initiatives remain suboptimal. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with village officials, youth, and farm laborers, supported by observation and village planning documents. The findings show weaknesses in training, career development, soft skills, hard skills, evaluation, and technology integration. Budget constraints explain only part of the problem. Deeper causes include infrastructure-oriented planning, weak labor-market mapping, fragmented coordination, limited participation, inadequate monitoring, and unequal digital capability. The study integrates human resource development with local governability and shows that effective training depends on the village capacity to translate market demand into programs, coordinate actors, and use outcome data. It proposes a five-stage strategy: annual workforce mapping, collaborative design, competency-based training, employment and enterprise linkage, and outcome-based monitoring. The model offers transferable lessons for villages facing similar labor-market pressures.



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INTRODUCTION

Rural workforce development has become a critical governance issue because technological change, industrial restructuring, and digitalization are altering the skills required for employment. Rural workers often face a combined disadvantage: limited access to competency-based training and weak access to information about emerging jobs. Recent evidence shows that digital transformation can improve rural occupational mobility by reducing information costs, but these gains depend on human capability, organizational capacity, and accessible infrastructure (Ingram & Maye, 2023; Qiao & Ao, 2024).

The problem is not limited to technical skills. Rural training systems must respond to local economic conditions, employer demand, and changes in livelihood opportunities. Muwaniki et al. (2024) show that a standardized training curriculum can fail when it does not respond to the actual structure of rural labor markets. Research on rural youth in Indonesia also indicates that limited skills, employment information, and viable livelihood pathways reinforce the experience of being left behind, even when mobility and technology are available (Clendenning, 2023).

In Indonesia, village decentralization provides local governments with authority and fiscal resources to invest in infrastructure, human capital, and economic empowerment. Evidence from the Village Fund Program indicates that village investment can reduce poverty and increase labor-force participation (Rammohan & Tohari, 2023). However, the availability of funds does not automatically produce effective development outcomes. Local administrative capacity, coordination mechanisms, feedback systems, participation, and institutional continuity strongly influence whether village programs create sustainable benefits (Anam et al., 2023; Handayani et al., 2023).

Citalanggeng Village presents an important case within this broader problem. The village is located in Karawang Regency, an area with substantial industrial activity, yet many residents of productive age have limited competencies for entering formal employment. A review of Citalanggeng Village Regulation No. 4 of 2024 concerning the 2025 Village Government Work Plan, Village Regulation No. 2 of 2019 concerning the 2019-2025 Village Medium-Term Development Plan, and Village Regulation No. 5 of 2024 concerning the 2025-2026 Village Medium-Term Development Plan found no specific and continuous program focused on workforce competencies.

Village development priorities remain dominated by physical infrastructure. Preliminary interviews with village officials and community members also indicate that most residents have never participated in village-organized job training. Existing activities are sporadic, while access to hard-skill, soft-skill, career, and digital development remains limited. This condition weakens the ability of local residents to use employment opportunities created by the surrounding industrial economy and increases dependence on informal work with unstable income.

These conditions indicate that the core problem is not simply an individual skills deficit. It is also a governance problem involving how the village identifies needs, allocates resources, coordinates with external institutions, mobilizes participation, and evaluates results. Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages assigns village governments a community empowerment function, while Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower affirms access to training and competency improvement. The gap between these mandates and field implementation requires an analysis that connects human resource development with village governance capacity.

Armstrong and Taylor (2017) define human resource development as a systematic process for improving knowledge, skills, capabilities, and work readiness through learning, career support, and continuous evaluation. In this study, the framework is operationalized through six dimensions: training and education, career development, soft-skill development,

hard-skill development, evaluation and measurement, and technology integration. These dimensions assess the substantive quality of village workforce development.

The HRD framework alone, however, does not fully explain why village programs remain fragmented. Recent village studies emphasize institutional setting, financial strategy, post-program mentoring, participation, internal capacity, and the ability to manage relationships among government, markets, and communities (Sambodo et al., 2023; Haryanto & Nurlinah, 2025). These insights support a governability perspective, which examines whether a local system can convert formal authority and external resources into coordinated, adaptive, and context-sensitive action.

Previous research has generally examined village funds, public-service performance, community-based development, or rural employment outcomes. Limited attention has been given to how a village government combines HRD content with governance mechanisms to build a locally relevant workforce strategy. This study addresses that gap by analyzing not only which HRD dimensions are weak, but also the institutional mechanisms that produce those weaknesses. Its novelty lies in extending HRD analysis from organizational settings to the village governance context.

Accordingly, this study asks: how does the Citalanggeng Village Government implement workforce development, why have the existing efforts remained suboptimal, and what governance-based strategy can be derived from the case? The study aims to produce an analytically transferable model for villages facing similar conditions, particularly rural communities located near expanding industrial or digital economies.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Human resource development provides the substantive foundation for improving workforce quality. Training and education build job-relevant knowledge, while career development connects individuals to employment pathways, mentoring, and progression. Hard skills provide technical competence, and soft skills support communication, discipline, responsibility, adaptability, and retention. Evaluation determines whether programs change competencies and employment outcomes, while technology integration expands access to learning and labor-market information (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

In rural settings, training quality depends on responsiveness rather than the number of activities delivered. Programs should begin with a diagnosis of local economic opportunities, participant characteristics, employer standards, and barriers to participation. Evidence from rural vocational education shows that one-size-fits-all programs can remain disconnected from actual livelihood structures and changing labor demand (Muwaniki et al., 2024). Therefore, needs assessment, employer involvement, practical learning, and certification are central to effective rural HRD.

Career development must also be interpreted more broadly than promotion within an organization. For village residents, it includes job-search assistance, access to information, mentoring, enterprise support, placement, and movement from vulnerable informal work to more stable livelihoods. The experience of rural youth in Indonesia demonstrates that restricted access to skills and livelihood information narrows future pathways and reinforces spatial inequality (Clendenning, 2023). This makes career support a public-development function rather than an individual responsibility alone.

Evaluation is a governance mechanism as well as an HRD function. Output indicators, such as the number of training participants, do not show whether the program improved competence, certification, job placement, work retention, or business continuity. Effective evaluation requires a baseline, clear outcome indicators, follow-up, and feedback into planning. Anam et al. (2023)

identify weak feedback mechanisms and limited local-government capacity as major constraints on the effectiveness of village development resources in Indonesia.

Village workforce development also depends on governability. Governability refers to the capacity of a local system to identify problems, coordinate actors, mobilize internal and external resources, manage participation, and adapt policies to local conditions. Village performance improves when good governance is supported by public trust and meaningful participation (Handayani et al., 2023). Similarly, community-based rural development becomes more sustainable when institutional arrangements, financing, mentoring, and local leadership are integrated rather than implemented as separate projects (Sambodo et al., 2023).

Technology integration creates opportunities but can also reproduce inequality. Digital platforms can reduce employment-information costs and improve rural occupational mobility (Qiao & Ao, 2024). Yet technology adoption requires both human and organizational capacity (Ingram & Maye, 2023). Rural digital initiatives are more likely to become sustainable when they combine digital and non-digital channels, involve communities, and support collective learning (Sommer et al., 2025). Multi-level collaboration among government, market actors, and community organizations is therefore essential for inclusive digital-village development (Ren et al., 2024).

This study combines the six HRD dimensions with five governance enablers: institutional planning capacity, budget orientation, interorganizational coordination, community participation, and data-based learning. The analytical proposition is that workforce development will remain fragmented when the content of HRD is not supported by these governance enablers. This integrated framework allows the study to move from a descriptive assessment of program absence toward a causal interpretation of why the strategy has not functioned and how it can be improved.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative case study design to examine village workforce development within its policy, institutional, and social context. A case study was appropriate because the research focused on the interaction between formal village mandates, planning practices, local labor conditions, and community experience rather than on measuring variable relationships statistically (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Citalanggeng Village was selected because preliminary evidence showed a clear contrast between its location within an industrial regency and the limited availability of structured workforce-development programs.

Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge of village administration, development planning, employment conditions, and community experience. They included the Village Head, Village Secretary, Head of Government Affairs, village youth, and farm laborers. This combination allowed the study to compare policy actors with residents who directly experienced the local labor market. The study did not seek statistical representation. It sought information-rich perspectives relevant to the case.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored existing programs, planning priorities, implementation barriers, community needs, technology use, and perceived outcomes. Observation provided contextual information on community and employment conditions. Documents included the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, Village Government Work Plan, relevant village regulations, and national policies concerning villages, manpower, job training, and electronic-based government.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). In the first stage, interview, observation, and document

data were organized using the six HRD dimensions as sensitizing categories. In the second stage, recurring explanations across these categories were compared to identify broader governance mechanisms, including budget orientation, institutional planning capacity, coordination, participation, labor-market information, and digital capability. Contradictory statements and differences between planned policy and field experience were retained for interpretation rather than removed as noise.

Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation across government and community informants and method triangulation across interviews, observation, and documents. The analysis also compared empirical statements with formal planning documents and regulations. The study supports analytical generalization, not statistical generalization. Its findings are transferable to other villages only when their institutional capacity, economic structure, labor-market pressure, and community characteristics are sufficiently comparable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training and Education in Improving Labor Force Quality

Training and education have not been implemented as a structured and continuous workforce-development program. The village government has mainly proposed activities through development planning forums and distributed information when external training became available. These actions provide limited access, but they do not form a program cycle with needs assessment, participant selection, competency targets, delivery, certification, and follow-up. Budget limitations are a visible constraint, but the findings indicate a deeper allocation problem. Village planning continues to prioritize physical infrastructure, while workforce development is treated as an optional activity that depends on residual resources or programs from higher levels of government. This pattern reflects a policy orientation in which human-capital investment has not been translated into a protected and accountable planning commitment.

The absence of a labor-market needs assessment further weakens program relevance. Karawang has substantial industrial employment potential, yet proposed training has not been systematically mapped against occupational standards, recruitment requirements, or the existing competencies of residents. As a result, training demand is expressed in broad terms, such as computers, language, or workshop skills, without a clear pathway from learning to certification and employment. From an HRD perspective, the problem is not only the low frequency of training. It is the absence of an institutional process that converts economic change into learning priorities. The village lacks routine mechanisms for collecting workforce data, consulting employers, and integrating findings into the RKPDes and APBDes. This supports the argument that organizational and human capacities shape whether technology and skills initiatives can be used effectively (Ingram & Maye, 2023).

The case is consistent with evidence that rural training becomes ineffective when it uses standardized content that is disconnected from local labor conditions (Muwaniki et al., 2024). It also reflects the coordination and feedback bottlenecks identified in Indonesian village development (Anam et al., 2023). Therefore, describing the problem solely as a budget shortage would overlook the planning and coordination failures that determine how available resources are used. A practical response is to conduct an annual workforce and employer-needs assessment before determining training themes. The village should then establish a dedicated workforce-development activity in its planning documents, select participants using transparent criteria, partner with the Manpower Office, training centers, companies, and educational institutions, and evaluate competency and employment outcomes after completion.

Career Development

Career development remains fragmented and has not formed a clear pathway from individual potential to employment or enterprise continuity. The village government has supported village-owned enterprise activities, savings and loan initiatives, and cooperation with the Manpower Office. However, these efforts have not been integrated into systematic mentoring, job matching, placement, or business-development services. The failure of the savings and loan program illustrates that access to capital alone does not create sustainable careers. Participants also need business selection, financial literacy, market access, mentoring, and accountability. Similarly, cooperation with the Manpower Office produces limited value when the village does not maintain an updated profile of job seekers, competencies, training history, and employer requirements.

The structural problem is the absence of an intermediary function at the village level. Residents must independently navigate training providers, employers, administrative requirements, and business opportunities. This increases information costs and disadvantages people with weaker networks or digital skills. Career outcomes are therefore shaped by the capacity of the local institution to connect actors, not only by individual motivation. This finding supports research showing that digital transformation can increase rural occupational mobility by reducing employment-information costs (Qiao & Ao, 2024). However, a digital channel alone is insufficient. The village must curate reliable information, identify residents who need assistance, and provide offline support for groups with limited access. Career development should combine digital information with human mentoring and institutional referral.

The village should establish a simple employment and enterprise service function. Its tasks should include maintaining a workforce database, disseminating verified vacancies, referring residents to competency training, documenting placement, coordinating business mentoring, and conducting follow-up at three and six months. This function can be managed through a designated village team and partnerships rather than a new permanent bureaucracy.

Soft-Skill Development

Soft-skill development has not become a specific and measurable program. Existing efforts are limited to general socialization, while residents and village officials identify work ethics, discipline, responsibility, communication, and mental readiness as important barriers to employment entry and retention. The findings should not be interpreted as evidence that unemployment is caused by weak attitudes among young people. Such an interpretation would shift responsibility from public institutions to individuals. The stronger explanation is an institutional supply gap: residents are expected to meet workplace behavioral standards, but the village has not provided structured preparation, coaching, simulated work experience, or employer feedback.

Within HRD, soft skills require repeated practice and reinforcement. One-off socialization can increase awareness, but it cannot reliably change communication behavior, teamwork, problem solving, punctuality, or responses to workplace pressure. Soft-skill learning should be embedded in technical training and connected to the situations participants will face during recruitment and employment. The limited career pathways described by rural youth research also show that readiness is shaped by access to information, role models, and viable opportunities, not only personal aspiration (Clendenning, 2023). Accordingly, soft-skill development should be connected with mentoring, job-search preparation, workplace orientation, and post-placement support.

The village can use short work-readiness modules covering communication, discipline, teamwork, occupational safety, interview practice, and financial behavior. Employers, former

trainees, vocational instructors, and local professionals should participate as facilitators. Evaluation should use observable competencies and participant reflection rather than attendance alone.

Hard-Skill Development as Work Capital

Hard-skill development has been initiated through workshop-related training and cooperation with the Manpower Office, but the activities have not continued as a competency pathway. Budget constraints, low participation, weak planning, and the absence of follow-up have reduced program continuity. Community members, particularly youth, continue to express demand for computer, language, and technical skills. The main analytical issue is alignment. Broad training topics do not necessarily correspond to occupational standards or actual vacancies. Without employer consultation, competency units, practical assessment, and certification, participants may complete training without obtaining a credible signal that improves recruitment prospects. This explains why isolated activities have had limited impact even when they respond to a general community demand.

Government Regulation No. 31 of 2006 concerning the National Job Training System requires systematic and competency-based training. International evidence also shows that vocational programs must respond to the structure and disruption of local labor markets rather than rely on a uniform curriculum (Muwaniki et al., 2024). The village therefore needs to function as a coordinator and needs assessor, while accredited institutions deliver specialized training. Priority hard-skill programs should be selected using three criteria: documented local demand, realistic access to certification, and a clear employment or enterprise pathway. Each program should specify competency targets, practical learning hours, assessment, certification where available, and follow-up. This approach allows limited village resources to support fewer but more credible pathways.

Evaluation and Measurement of Employment Programs

Evaluation and measurement remain informal and are not based on a structured employment-information system. Program success is assessed through general observations, such as a decline in social-assistance recipients or the success of a small number of businesses. The village has not routinely documented baseline competencies, training completion, certification, placement, retention, income change, or business continuity. This weakness limits policy learning. Without outcome data, the village cannot determine whether a program failed because of participant selection, training quality, market mismatch, weak mentoring, or limited employer access. The problem confirms that feedback mechanisms are central to effective village policy and that financial resources have limited value when local administrative systems cannot convert implementation experience into planning improvement (Anam et al., 2023).

A minimum monitoring framework should record participant profile, baseline competence, attendance, completion, assessment, certification, placement or business start, and status at three and six months. The village should review these indicators with participants and partners at least once each planning cycle. Evaluation findings should determine whether a program is continued, redesigned, or discontinued.

Technology Integration in Improving Labor Force Quality

Technology use has begun through WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, but it functions mainly as a general communication channel. The platforms have not been organized into a workforce-development service that provides verified vacancies, training schedules, learning resources, participant records, or referral assistance. Low and unequal digital literacy limits the reach of online information. Some young residents use the internet to search for jobs, while other

groups face difficulties in accessing, evaluating, or acting on digital information. A digital-only approach could therefore increase exclusion by benefiting residents who already possess stronger devices, connectivity, networks, and confidence.

The findings align with research showing that digital tools can improve rural labor mobility by reducing information costs, but only when capability and institutional support are present (Ingram & Maye, 2023; Qiao & Ao, 2024). Rural digital innovation becomes more sustainable when community participation, collective learning, and hybrid digital and non-digital access are built into implementation (Sommer et al., 2025). The village should develop a hybrid workforce-information system. Digital channels can publish verified opportunities and learning materials, while village-based assistance can help residents register, prepare documents, and access training. Basic digital-literacy sessions should cover job searching, document submission, online safety, and verification of recruitment information. Multi-level cooperation with public agencies and market actors can strengthen content quality and sustainability (Ren et al., 2024).

Integrated Analysis and Replicable Strategy Model

Across the six HRD dimensions, the same cross-cutting mechanism appears: fragmented governance prevents isolated activities from becoming a workforce-development system. Budget constraints matter, but they interact with infrastructure-oriented planning, weak labor-market data, limited coordination, low participation, and the absence of outcome-based evaluation. Table 1 summarizes the relationship between the ideal HRD condition, the empirical evidence, the governance gap, and the required policy response.

Table 1. Comparison of ideal HRD conditions, empirical evidence, governance gaps, and policy responses

HRD dimension	Ideal condition	Empirical evidence	Governance gap	Policy response
Training and education	Periodic, needs-based, and linked to competencies	Sporadic proposals and limited external opportunities	No annual needs assessment or dedicated program cycle	Annual workforce mapping and planned training partnerships
Career development	Mentoring, job matching, and enterprise pathways	BUMDes, loans, and agency cooperation remain fragmented	No village intermediary or updated job-seeker database	Village employment and enterprise service with follow-up
Soft skills	Practice-based work readiness integrated with technical learning	General socialization without behavioral assessment	Readiness treated as an individual issue rather than a service gap	Work-readiness modules, mentoring, and employer feedback
Hard skills	Competency-based training, assessment, and certification	Broad training topics with limited continuity	Weak alignment with occupational standards and vacancies	Employer-informed priorities and accredited delivery
Evaluation	Baseline, output, outcome, and follow-up indicators	Informal judgments and limited employment data	Weak feedback from implementation to planning	Track certification, placement, retention, and business continuity
Technology	Inclusive digital learning and labor-market information	Social media used mainly for general communication	Digital divide and no curated workforce service	Hybrid digital and in-person assistance with digital literacy

The findings support a five-stage strategy that can be adapted by villages with similar labor-market pressures. The stages are annual workforce mapping, collaborative program design and budgeting, competency-based delivery, employment and enterprise linkage, and monitoring with policy feedback. Figure 1 shows that each stage produces information required by the next stage, while evaluation returns evidence to the planning process.

Figure 1. Replicable village workforce development strategy

Replicable Village Workforce Development Strategy



The strategy requires collaboration because the village government cannot deliver every technical function independently. Its core role is to diagnose needs, mobilize participation, allocate resources, coordinate accredited training and employers, ensure inclusive access, and monitor results. The Manpower Office, training centers, companies, educational institutions, BUMDes, community organizations, and residents provide complementary expertise and implementation capacity.

The theoretical contribution is that village-level HRD should be understood as a governability problem, not only a training problem. Armstrong and Taylor's HRD dimensions identify what must be developed, while the governance analysis explains whether the village can organize those dimensions into a coherent system. This extends HRD into a decentralized public-governance setting and explains why formal authority and funding may produce limited outcomes when internal capacity and stakeholder coordination remain weak (Haryanto & Nurlinah, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The Cintalanggeng Village Government has not yet established an integrated strategy for improving workforce quality. Weaknesses appear across training, career development, soft skills, hard skills, evaluation, and technology integration. Budget constraints contribute to the problem, but they do not provide a complete explanation. The more fundamental causes are infrastructure-oriented planning, limited institutional capacity, weak labor-market information, fragmented coordination, low community involvement, and the absence of a data-based learning system.

The study contributes theoretically by integrating HRD with local governability. HRD explains the competencies and support that residents require, while governability explains whether the village can identify those needs, mobilize actors, translate them into plans, and adjust programs using evidence. The case therefore shows that rural workforce quality is shaped by the interaction between individual capability and public-institutional capability.

The practical recommendation is to implement the five-stage strategy presented in Figure 1. The village should update its workforce profile once each year, include a dedicated workforce-development activity in the RKPDs and APBDs, co-design training with employers and accredited providers, combine technical, soft, and digital skills, and maintain employment and enterprise referral services. Each program should report participant completion, assessment, certification, placement or business start, and status at three and six months. These indicators provide measurable criteria for deciding whether a program should be continued or redesigned.

This study is limited to one village and does not support statistical generalization. Its value lies in analytical transferability to villages with comparable characteristics, particularly proximity to industrial growth, limited local skills, and infrastructure-dominated planning. Future research should compare several village types, include employer and training-provider perspectives, and test whether the proposed strategy improves competency, placement, work retention, and enterprise sustainability over time.

Author Contributions

Yayang Siti Patimah: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, and writing - original draft. Indra Aditya: supervision, validation, and writing - review and editing. Kariena Febriantini: supervision, validation, and writing - review and editing. All authors discussed the findings, reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version.

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Competing interest. The authors declare no competing interest. Conflict of interest. The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest to report in this study.

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