

EDUCATING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

EDUCANDO AS COMUNIDADES POR MEIO DA RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL CORPORATIVA: O PAPEL DA GOVERNANÇA COLABORATIVA NA FORMAÇÃO DE CAPACIDADES COMUNITÁRIAS

Article received on: 12/23/2025

Article accepted on: 3/25/2026

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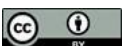
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility is increasingly framed as a community education and capacity building strategy rather than short-term assistance. Collaborative governance is crucial in shaping participation, learning continuity, and sustainability. This study examines how CSR is enacted through collaborative governance and how it influences community capacity building in Padang Lawas Regency. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observation, and document analysis involving corporate actors, village governments, public service providers, youth organisations, educational institutions, and community members. Analysis focused on governance dynamics and community learning processes within CSR practices. CSR implementation remains predominantly assistance-oriented, emphasising charitable and infrastructure programmes that reinforce transactional relations and limit sustained social learning. Collaborative governance is weakly institutionalised, with centralised corporate

Resumo

A Responsabilidade Social Corporativa é crescentemente enquadrada como estratégia de educação comunitária e fortalecimento de capacidades, em vez de assistência de curto prazo. A governança colaborativa é crucial para moldar a participação, a continuidade da aprendizagem e a sustentabilidade. Este estudo examina como a RSC é implementada por meio da governança colaborativa e como influencia o fortalecimento de capacidades comunitárias no Regency de Padang Lawas. Utilizando uma abordagem de estudo de caso qualitativo, os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas em profundidade, observação de campo e análise documental envolvendo atores corporativos, governos aldeões, prestadores de serviços públicos, organizações juvenis, instituições de ensino e membros da comunidade. A implementação da RSC permanece predominantemente orientada para a assistência, enfatizando programas de caridade e infraestrutura que reforçam relações transacionais. O estudo conceitua a RSC como



decision-making, administrative village roles, and beneficiary-based community participation. As a result, community learning is fragmented, short-lived, and weakly institutionalised, while collaboration with public health services produces only ad hoc learning effects. The study conceptualises CSR as a CSR-Based Community Learning Ecosystem dependent on facilitative leadership, institutional design, and sustained collaboration. Strengthening CSR as community education requires deliberative spaces, locally grounded learning pathways, and measurable capacity outcomes to support durable community capability.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility. Collaborative Governance. Community Education. Community Capacity Building. Rural Development.

um Ecossistema de Aprendizagem Comunitária Baseado em RSC, dependente de liderança facilitadora e design institucional.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade Social Corporativa. Governança Colaborativa. Educação Comunitária. Desenvolvimento Rural.

1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary development governance requires an expansion of participatory space for actors beyond the state because the complexity of social problems can no longer be addressed through bureaucratic capacity alone (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). This necessity places government, the private sector, and society within a single decision ecology that mutually influences one another, such that governance design must be understood as a mechanism of multi-actor coordination operating through procedures, norms, and resource exchanges (Dressel *et al.*, 2021; Hennchen & Schrempf-Stirling, 2021).

The concept of good governance reinforces this demand by emphasizing accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity as prerequisites for policy legitimacy (Dressel *et al.*, 2021; Milhem *et al.*, 2025). This orientation encourages the emergence of governance that does not stop at administration but moves toward the formation of processes that enable public interests to be tested through participation that is equitable and accountable.

The collaborative governance framework becomes relevant when collective decision-making is positioned as a deliberative arena that directly involves non-state

stakeholders (Fanida & Ladiqi, 2024; Hovardas, 2021; Seiferth *et al.*, 2025). The rationale of collaboration does not merely increase the number of actors but ensures that consensus-building processes, deliberation, and role-sharing operate under a clear institutional design, facilitative leadership, and long-term commitment to public goals.

Cross-sector collaborative practices have demonstrated utility across various fields of public service, including infrastructure and regional development, because they are able to combine regulatory authority, technical capacity, capital, and social networks (Hovardas, 2021; McIlwain *et al.*, 2024). Key lessons from these practices lie in the need for goal alignment, responsibility allocation, and evaluation mechanisms that prevent the dominance of particular actors so that public benefits are not reduced to mere operational gains.

Corporate social responsibility instruments gain strong legitimacy within this landscape because they provide pathways for private sector contributions to social and environmental development, particularly in areas intersecting with natural resource utilization. Regulations governing corporate social and environmental responsibility establish a normative foundation that CSR is not an incidental activity but part of a strategic plan that should be connected to regional development agendas (Apriliani *et al.*, 2025; Reji, 2023).

The sustainable development framework further clarifies the direction of CSR as social investment that strengthens individual and community capacities, including through equitable access to education, health, and economic opportunities (Aliangan, 2025; Roy & Marsafawy, 2021). The focus on community education becomes essential because social learning functions as a driver of behavioral change, skill enhancement, and the growth of citizens' bargaining power, enabling programs to move beyond outputs toward outcomes that can be sustained over time.

The SDGs provide a normative horizon that demands inclusivity and the principle of no one left behind, such that empowerment cannot be understood as temporary assistance. The role of education within the Village SDGs becomes pivotal to ensure that communities are capable of managing local resources sustainably, understanding environmentally friendly practices, and building economic resilience that is not fragile in the face of social or market shocks.

Collaboration serves as an operational bridge to realize this horizon because community education requires a supportive ecosystem, ranging from village administrations and public services to local organizations and corporate CSR units (Hendrayani *et al.*, 2025; Surya & Mahmud, 2025). Mature collaborative performance should facilitate the mapping of community learning needs, the design of locally contextualized curricula, sustained mentoring, and access to production and marketing networks for the outputs of capacity-building programs.

The context of Padang Lawas Regency highlights the importance of collaborative design because the region has a plantation-based economy and constitutes a space of intensive interaction between companies and surrounding communities. The presence of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia as a dominant economic actor presents both opportunities and risks, as corporate social contributions can accelerate human development when directed as a community education strategy, while transactional assistance patterns risk perpetuating dependency.

Empirical conditions indicate a decline in CSR allocations from 2020 to 2023, while the scope of covered sectors expanded to include education and the environment in 2022 and 2023. Recorded budgets amounted to IDR 1,407,550,000 in 2020, decreased to IDR 1,080,210,000 in 2021, further declined to IDR 806,000,000 in 2022, and then slightly increased to IDR 842,000,000 in 2023, marking internal corporate evaluation dynamics while also signaling the instability of long-term funding commitments for social development.

The CSR program map from 2021 to 2024 reinforces indications of an implementation orientation that is more dominantly charitable and infrastructure-focused than learning-based empowerment. A list of 28 programs shows that only a small portion falls within the spectrum of empowerment and capacity strengthening, while the majority consists of basic needs assistance, pandemic-related aid, public facility support, and incidental interventions that do not systematically build competencies, literacy, and economic independence.

These facts present a tension between *das sein* and *das sollen* in the direction of CSR, because normatively the corporate pillar includes PHI Cerdas as an education domain, while field implementation shows that education is more often understood as the provision of facilities or honoraria assistance rather than the design of community

learning. Community demand patterns recorded in various proposals also demonstrate the dominance of physical needs and direct assistance, such that without facilitative leadership and strong institutional design, corporate–community relations are prone to fall into transactional logics and cash-based expectations.

The relevance of this study rests on the need to shift CSR from assistance toward community education that strengthens community capacity through collaborative governance, in line with the agreed title concerning community education through CSR and the role of collaborative governance in capacity building. The analytical agenda is directed toward examining how initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative processes can produce measurable social learning through changes in capacity, participation, and independence, thereby enabling CSR to function as a sustainable informal education strategy rather than merely a short-term distribution of benefits.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Collaborative governance and community education

Collaborative governance has emerged as a response to the limitations of hierarchical government approaches in addressing complex and multidimensional social development issues (Domingo *et al.*, 2024; Khiawnoi *et al.*, 2025). Such complexity requires the involvement of actors beyond the state, including the private sector and society, within a decision-making arena that enables equitable exchanges of resources, knowledge, and legitimacy. This framework views governance not as the sole domain of the state, but as a process of institutional interaction that places multiple actors in relationships of interdependence to achieve public goals.

Collaborative governance is understood as a governance mechanism that emphasizes deliberative dialogue, consensus, and clear role distribution among public and non-public actors. This framework assesses the success of collaboration not only in terms of policy outputs, but also in terms of process quality, including levels of trust, facilitative leadership, and institutional design that enables meaningful participation.

Collaboration is therefore not reduced to administrative coordination, but positioned as a social process that shapes shared norms and collective learning.

Within the context of corporate social responsibility, collaborative governance provides a theoretical foundation for interpreting CSR as part of development governance rather than merely a legal obligation or a reputational strategy (Seiferth *et al.*, 2025). CSR within this framework is understood as a space of interaction among companies, local governments, and communities that has the potential to form long-term relationships based on trust and shared interests. This position shifts CSR from a logic of aid distribution toward a logic of managing social processes integrated with regional development agendas.

The dimension of community education becomes relevant when CSR is understood as a mechanism operating through processes of social learning (Haque, 2023; Roy & Marsafawy, 2021). Education in this sense is not confined to formal institutions, but takes place through mentoring, training, participation in programs, and collective reflection on implemented practices. These processes enable communities to build practical knowledge, skills, and organizational capacity necessary to manage resources and make decisions more independently (Khan *et al.*, 2025).

The linkage between collaborative governance and community education lies in the role of collaborative processes as a medium for learning. Cross-actor interactions in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CSR programs create situational and contextual learning spaces, in which communities are not merely beneficiaries but subjects involved in the production of knowledge and development practices. When such processes operate without the dominance of particular actors, collaboration holds the potential to generate sustainable capacity enhancement.

This theoretical framework provides a basis for analyzing the CSR practices of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia in Padang Lawas Regency as both a governance and community education phenomenon. Collaborative governance is employed to examine how inter-actor relations are formed, while the community education perspective is used to assess the extent to which CSR programs function as social learning processes that build community capacity. Through this framework, the study is directed toward understanding the tension between charitable CSR practices and their potential transformation into sustainable, collaboration-based educational strategies.

2.2 CSR-based community learning ecosystem

The concept of a CSR-Based Community Learning Ecosystem positions corporate social responsibility as a space for community learning formed through sustained interaction among companies, local governments, and communities (Guo *et al.*, 2025; Mabetha *et al.*, 2023). Education within this framework is understood as a social process that occurs outside formal educational institutions, where knowledge, skills, and values are developed through practice, mentoring, and direct engagement in development programs. This position allows CSR to be interpreted not as an aid activity, but as a social learning infrastructure embedded within local development governance.

A CSR-based community learning ecosystem operates through collaborative relationships that connect material resources, institutional capacity, and the social experiences of the actors involved. Companies function as resource providers and program facilitators, local governments act as policy guides and guardians of public legitimacy, while communities become learning subjects who articulate needs, manage practices, and internalize knowledge. These interactions shape a learning environment that is contextual, adaptive, and grounded in the lived experiences of the community.

Community education within this ecosystem is not reduced to technical training activities alone, but encompasses processes of enhancing collective thinking capacity, decision-making, and resource management. CSR programs designed within a learning framework enable communities to understand program objectives, participate in planning, and reflect on achieved outcomes. These processes encourage the transformation of community roles from passive beneficiaries into actors with agency in local social and economic development.

The conceptualization of CSR as a community learning ecosystem provides an analytical basis for assessing the quality and direction of CSR programs within a collaborative governance context. An effectively functioning ecosystem is characterized by the continuity of learning processes, relatively balanced role distribution, and program integration with local needs and dynamics. This framework is used in the study to examine the extent to which CSR practices are able to function as community education strategies that build capacity, reduce dependency, and sustainably strengthen community self-reliance.

2.3 Previous research

Studies on Corporate Social Responsibility, collaborative governance, and community empowerment show an increasing trend in recent literature, particularly within developing country contexts. Prior research has generally focused on program effectiveness, stakeholder roles, and the socio-economic impacts of CSR. However, most studies still position CSR as a development intervention instrument rather than as a space for community learning integrated within collaborative governance. This positioning provides an entry point for situating the present study within the existing body of scholarship.

Contemporary discourse on corporate social responsibility, community education, and collaborative governance reveals a shift in orientation from output-based program evaluation toward analysis of social learning processes and cross-actor governance. This shift reflects growing awareness that community capacity building cannot be separated from the quality of interactions, institutional design, and collaborative mechanisms that support learning sustainability.

Aliangan (2025) examines the strengthening of rural education through community involvement using a qualitative case study approach in the Philippines. The findings indicate that improvements in educational capacity are strongly influenced by active community participation in planning and managing learning processes, positioning education as an arena for the formation of social agency. The limitation of this study lies in the absence of discussion on the role of the private sector and cross-actor governance mechanisms in sustaining programs. This study moves beyond those findings by positioning corporate CSR as part of a collaborative governance design that shapes a community education ecosystem.

Dressel *et al.* (2021) employs a qualitative comparative approach to analyze collaborative governance practices in environmental management in Sweden. The study demonstrates that collaborative success is determined by social learning, inter-actor trust, and institutional rules that enable sustained deliberation. Although situated in an environmental context, these findings are conceptually relevant because they emphasize that social outcomes emerge from the quality of collaborative processes rather than policy design alone.

Hovardas (2021) elaborates social learning as the core of collaborative sustainability through a conceptual-analytical approach that positions social sustainability as a process of social learning within multi-stakeholder governance. The study emphasizes that social sustainability depends on actors' capacity to learn collectively, negotiate meaning, and adapt practices reflectively. The limitation of this study lies in its conceptual nature and lack of empirical examination of CSR implementation. This study addresses that gap by providing field-based evidence on how social learning operates or is constrained within collaborative governance-based CSR practices.

Mohapatra (2024) offers a quantitative empirical approach exploring policy barriers and CSR practices in India. The findings indicate that institutional constraints, limited organizational capacity, and a focus on formal compliance constitute major factors hindering CSR effectiveness. This study complements those findings by interpreting CSR barriers as failures in community learning design and weaknesses in collaborative governance mechanisms.

Upreti and Malhotra (2024) discuss the role of CSR in bridging urban–rural education gaps in India within the SDG 4 framework. The study positions CSR as a strategic instrument for expanding access to and improving the quality of education. This study extends that discourse by examining how CSR operates as a community education process shaped by collaborative relationships among companies, local governments, and communities.

Prior studies underscore the importance of community education, social learning, and cross-actor collaboration in capacity development. However, most research continues to treat CSR, education, and collaborative governance as separate analytical domains. This study positions itself at their intersection by examining CSR as a community education ecosystem produced through collaborative governance practices, thereby offering an integrative perspective that remains underexplored in contemporary literature.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design to develop an in-depth understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility practices as a community education strategy within a collaborative governance framework. The qualitative approach is selected because the study focuses on processes, meanings, and social relations among actors involved in CSR implementation, rather than on quantitative measurement of program impacts (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Weyant, 2022). The case study design is employed to capture contextual dynamics comprehensively within a single research setting, namely Padang Lawas Regency, which possesses specific social, economic, and institutional characteristics.

The research design is directed toward examining how interactions among companies, local governments, and communities shape a community learning ecosystem through CSR programs. The analytical focus is placed not only on program outputs, but also on CSR planning, implementation, and evaluation processes as arenas of social learning. Through this design, the study is able to reveal tensions between charitable CSR practices and their potential transformation into collaboration-based community education strategies.

3.2 Research informants

Research informants are determined purposively by considering their direct involvement, substantive knowledge, and strategic positions in the implementation of CSR programs of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia. Purposive sampling is applied to ensure that selected informants are capable of providing relevant information regarding collaborative governance, community learning processes, and the dynamics of community empowerment. Informants include corporate actors, village government representatives, public service institutions, and community beneficiaries of CSR programs.

Table 1*Research Informants*

No	Informant Category	Position/Role	Role in CSR Program
1	Company	CSR Manager/Coordinator of PT PHI	Designer and implementer of CSR programs
2	Local Government	Representative of Regency Government	Policy coordination and program legitimacy
3	Village Government	Village Head in areas surrounding the company	Liaison between programs and community
4	Public Services	Health center/Posyandu personnel partnering with CSR	Implementation of health and education programs
5	Educational Institutions	Managers of MDTA/Schools receiving CSR	Recipients and implementers of education programs
6	Youth Organizations	Karang Taruna administrators	Implementers of economic empowerment programs
7	Community	Community leaders/beneficiaries	Subjects of learning and participation

Source: Field Research Findings (2025)

3.3 Data collection

Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews to explore informants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of CSR implementation and collaborative processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Takona, 2024). Interviews are carried out in a semi-structured manner to provide a consistent question framework while allowing flexibility for the exploration of emerging field issues. This technique enables the researcher to understand how CSR is perceived either as assistance or as a community learning process.

Field observations are undertaken to capture CSR practices directly, including forms of interaction among actors, levels of community participation, and program implementation dynamics at the village level. Observations focus on educational activities, mentoring processes, and CSR-related meetings to assess the alignment between planning and on-the-ground implementation.

Documentation studies are used to complement primary data through analysis of corporate and related institutional documents. Analyzed documents include CSR realization reports, budget data, program lists, community assistance proposals, and other supporting documents. This technique assists in tracing the consistency of CSR policies and strengthens findings derived from interviews and observations.

3.4 Data analysis technique

Data analysis is conducted interactively following the model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying interview, observation, and documentation data to align with the research focus. This process includes initial coding of themes related to collaborative governance, CSR, and community education.

Data display is presented in the form of analytical narratives and thematic tables to facilitate understanding of relational patterns among actors and community learning processes. Data presentation assists the researcher in identifying linkages between institutional design, facilitative leadership, and levels of community participation in CSR programs.

Conclusion drawing is conducted gradually through interpretation and verification processes. Conclusions are not drawn linearly, but are continuously tested by comparing data across sources. This process ensures that research findings reflect the empirical dynamics occurring in the field.

3.5 Data trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness is ensured through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from companies, government actors, and communities (Flick, 2022). This technique is used to test data consistency regarding CSR planning and implementation as well as the roles of each actor in collaborative processes. Differences in informant perspectives are treated as analytical material rather than data weaknesses.

Method triangulation is conducted by comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation. This approach ensures that research findings do not rely on a single data collection method. Trustworthiness is further strengthened through discussions of preliminary findings with key informants to ensure alignment between the researcher's interpretations and field realities.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study observes principles of social research ethics by ensuring the confidentiality of informant and institutional identities. Informant consent is obtained prior to interviews, and informants are provided with explanations regarding the objectives, benefits, and processes of the research. Informants retain the right to refuse or withdraw participation at any stage of the research process.

Research integrity is maintained by ensuring that data are collected and analyzed honestly, transparently, and responsibly. The researcher avoids conflicts of interest and ensures that research outcomes do not cause harm to any party. These ethical principles are integral to maintaining trust between the researcher and research participants, as well as to safeguarding the credibility of the scientific findings.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Initial conditions of CSR-based community education

The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility by PT Permata Hijau Indonesia in Padang Lawas Regency has taken place within a social and institutional context that was established long before the idea of community education emerged as a programmatic orientation. Relationships among the company, local government, and the community have developed under interaction patterns that position CSR primarily as a mechanism for aid distribution and fulfillment of social obligations, rather than as a consciously designed learning process. This condition has shaped expectations, participation patterns, and the ways in which actors interpret their involvement in CSR programs.

In practice, CSR implementation is influenced by uneven configurations of power and resources, a long history of charitable assistance programs, and the absence of institutional designs linking CSR to community capacity strengthening. Local communities more frequently assume the role of passive beneficiaries, while the company retains primary control over program planning and realization, with village governments functioning in an administrative capacity. This situation creates a social environment that is not conducive to the growth of trust, dialogue, and long-term commitment required for CSR to function as a space for community education. These initial conditions are systematically summarized in Table 2 as an empirical overview of the constraints and opportunities of CSR-based community learning in the research area.

Table 2

Initial Conditions of CSR-Based Community Education in Padang Lawas

Aspect of Initial Conditions	Empirical Findings from the Field	Implications for Community Education
Resource Distribution	The company controls CSR budgets and program design; village government plays an administrative role; communities act as beneficiaries	Community access to learning processes is limited from the planning stage
Patterns of Inter-Actor Relations	Company–community relations are transactional; one-way communication; minimal dialogue forums	Learning environment is non-deliberative and socially unsafe
History of CSR Implementation	CSR dominated by physical and charitable assistance; no sustainable training- or mentoring-based programs identified	Communities become accustomed to receiving aid rather than engaging in learning processes
Community Participation Motivation	Communities tend to reject training and request cash assistance; low participation in capacity development programs	Short-term incentives hinder learning motivation and capacity enhancement
CSR Institutional Design	No written guidelines, curriculum, or process-based evaluation mechanisms	CSR has not been positioned as a community learning system
Initial Commitment to Education	No initial agreement on educational or empowerment objectives	Educational orientation is not formed from the outset of programs

Source: Field Research Findings (2025)

From the outset, CSR implementation by PT Permata Hijau Indonesia in Padang Lawas Regency developed within relational patterns that positioned the company as the dominant decision-making actor, while village governments and communities occupied more administrative and receptive roles. This configuration shaped an initial context in which CSR was understood as an aid distribution mechanism rather than as a participatory community education process (Hendrayani *et al.*, 2025; Sirine, 2024).

Transactional inter-actor relations further reinforced initial conditions that were unfavorable to the development of community education. Village governments more often functioned as proposal intermediaries and aid distributors, without substantive involvement in deliberations concerning community needs. Aziz Lubis, a village official of Huta Lombang, stated that village involvement had not reached the stage of jointly formulating program needs, as final decisions remained at the company level and were adjusted to internal priorities and budget availability.

The history of CSR implementation by PT PHI demonstrates the dominance of charitable and physically oriented programs, such as basic needs assistance, construction of worship facilities, and minor infrastructure support. This historical pattern shaped community expectations of CSR as routine assistance, particularly during specific moments such as the month of Ramadan. Dependence on such aid patterns has hindered a shift in the meaning of CSR toward learning processes, as communities have become accustomed to positioning themselves as passive beneficiaries rather than as learning subjects.

These conditions are reinforced by the absence of an institutional CSR design linking programs to community education objectives. No written guidelines, curricula, or process-based evaluation mechanisms were identified to guide sustainable learning. Dr. Sri, Head of Latong Community Health Center, explained that CSR assistance was provided without long-term cooperation agreements and without follow-up mentoring, so that once activities were completed, communication between the company and the health center was discontinued.

Collaboration with Latong Community Health Center illustrates the partial potential of community learning. Financial support from PT PHI enabled the implementation of nutrition counseling, immunization, and productive youth education directly within communities. Dr. Sri stated that without such support, educational

activities would be difficult to conduct due to limited health center budgets. However, the absence of technical standards and mentoring from the company prevented these learning activities from developing into integrated long-term programs.

Community motivation to engage in CSR programs at the initial stage reflected an orientation dominated by short-term needs. Nuraini, a community leader of Huta Lombang Village, stated that residents rarely attended training sessions if transportation allowances or direct assistance were not provided, indicating that participation was driven more by immediate economic needs than by long-term learning aspirations.

The failure to sustain the catfish cultivation program indicates that the company's role as a learning facilitator was present only in a limited manner during the early project stage. Rafli Hasibuan, a member of Karang Taruna, explained that company mentoring ceased too quickly, even though youth groups required longer guidance to manage enterprises and resolve internal conflicts. This condition reinforced community perceptions that CSR was implemented as a temporary program rather than as a sustained community learning commitment (Reji, 2023).

Initial conditions of CSR implementation by PT PHI indicate that community education had not been established as an orientation from the outset of programs. Resource imbalances, transactional relations, a history of charitable assistance, short-term incentive-based motivations, and the absence of institutional learning designs shaped a social environment that did not support the growth of collective learning processes. These conditions constitute the initial context for understanding how governance practices and community learning through CSR developed in subsequent stages.

4.2 Governance practices shaping community learning through CSR

CSR governance practices of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia directly shape how community learning processes emerge, operate, or are constrained at the local level. Governance in this context is understood not merely as administrative arrangement, but as a set of leadership practices, institutional designs, and interaction mechanisms that determine whether CSR can function as a space for collective learning. Decision-making patterns, role distribution among actors, and the sustainability of facilitation become key

factors influencing the quality and direction of community learning formed through CSR programs (Apriliani *et al.*, 2025; Mohapatra, 2024).

The following table presents the main governance practices shaping the dynamics of community learning through CSR in Padang Lawas Regency.

Table 3

Governance Practices Shaping Community Learning through CSR

Governance Dimension	Empirical Practices in the Field	Impact on Community Learning
Facilitative Leadership	The company leads CSR planning and implementation; facilitation is limited to the initial phase of programs	Learning processes are not sustained and depend on initial corporate initiatives
Institutional Design	No written guidelines, long-term MoUs, or CSR learning curricula	Community learning is unstructured and difficult to replicate
Decision-Making Mechanisms	Program decisions are determined internally by the company based on priorities and budget availability	Community learning needs are insufficiently accommodated
Collaboration Patterns	Cooperation is incidental with technical institutions such as health centers	Learning occurs partially and sectorally
Role of Village Government	Functions as an administrative liaison and aid distributor	Dialog facilitation and learning functions do not develop
Community Involvement	Participation is limited to benefit reception and technical execution	Communities do not yet function as learning subjects
Program Sustainability	Programs end once assistance or activities are completed	Learning processes do not evolve into long-term capacity

Source: Field Research Findings (2025)

CSR governance practices of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia indicate that community learning is shaped primarily by how decisions are made, actor roles are defined, and facilitation is carried out. This governance operates within a structure that positions the company as the center of control, while other actors follow predetermined directions. Such patterns create limited learning spaces, as learning emerges as an indirect consequence of programs rather than as an objective intentionally designed from the outset.

Leadership in CSR implementation demonstrates a form of facilitative character that is partial and inconsistent. The company is present during the initial phase of programs, particularly in providing resources and brief monitoring, but this involvement does not continue when structural problems arise. Atas Nasution, the first-period Chair of Karang Taruna, noted that company facilitation was present only at the initial stage, while no follow-up facilitation mechanisms were available when internal conflicts and capacity issues emerged.

CSR institutional design also plays a crucial role in shaping the direction of community learning. The absence of written guidelines, curricula, or long-term cooperation agreements causes CSR implementation to depend on internal corporate flexibility. Dr. Sri explained that CSR assistance was provided without MoUs and without clear technical standards, resulting in ad hoc activities that are difficult to evaluate as sustainable learning processes.

Decision-making mechanisms centralized at the corporate level narrow the space for articulating community learning needs. Aziz Lubis stated that villages more often receive program decisions rather than being involved in planning deliberations. This situation causes community capacity-building needs to be inadequately accommodated, as programs are adjusted to corporate priorities and budget availability rather than to community learning agendas.

Collaboration patterns demonstrate variations in learning quality across sectors. Cooperation with Latong Community Health Center shows a relatively clear division of roles, where the company provides financial support and the health center conducts health education activities within communities. However, the absence of continued facilitation and coordination caused learning to remain sectoral, without integration into a broader community development framework.

The role of village government in CSR governance is largely administrative rather than facilitative. Fahmi Hasibuan explained that the main task of the village is to record aid recipients and ensure smooth distribution, particularly ahead of Ramadan. Limited understanding of CSR and empowerment means that village governments have not functioned as dialog bridges between companies and communities in designing long-term learning processes (Ali *et al.*, 2025; Emon & Khan, 2025).

Program sustainability becomes the governance aspect most decisive in shaping the direction of community learning. The experience of catfish cultivation demonstrates that programs cease once corporate support ends, without transition mechanisms preparing groups for independence. Atas Nasution emphasized that the main issue was not merely capital, but human resource capacity and social conflict requiring sustained facilitation.

CSR governance practices of PT PHI shape community learning that is partial, unstructured, and dependent on sectoral initiatives. Inconsistent leadership, weak institutional design, centralized decision-making, and limited community involvement produce fragile and short-term learning processes. These practices explain why CSR has not yet functioned as a sustainable community learning ecosystem, despite the presence of learning potential within several collaborative initiatives.

4.3 Discussion

The transformation of CSR toward community education positions corporate social programs as part of a public learning architecture that operates outside formal schooling, through practice, mentoring, and the strengthening of citizens' capacities. The global direction of sustainable development emphasizes that community-based capacity building constitutes a foundation for local social and economic resilience, particularly in regions intersecting with resource-based industries (Aliangan, 2025; Worton & Furman, 2021). The findings of this study indicate that the CSR of PT Permata Hijau Indonesia has not yet moved steadily in this direction because program orientation remains strongly focused on aid distribution, resulting in social learning that should shape competencies, literacy, and community self-reliance emerging only partially and sectorally.

The global need for practice-based community education places program design as the primary determinant of success, rather than merely the scale of *budget allocation* (Klein & Graham, 2025; Mabetha *et al.*, 2023; Scallan Walter *et al.*, 2022). The dynamics of declining CSR allocations during the 2020–2023 period, occurring simultaneously with an expansion of program sectors, reflect internal evaluation processes that have not been accompanied by a paradigm shift from physical outputs to learning outcomes.

The collaborative governance framework positions initial conditions as decisive factors shaping collaboration trajectories, including resource asymmetries, levels of trust, histories of collaboration, motivations, and initial commitments (Birgel *et al.*, 2023; Prutzer *et al.*, 2021). The findings demonstrate that these prerequisites have not been consolidated in the implementation of CSR by PT PHI, as decision-making control remains centralized, village government roles are largely administrative, and communities are more often positioned as beneficiaries.

Institutional design and collaborative processes within the collaborative governance framework require the presence of rules of engagement, coordination mechanisms, and process accountability that enable sustained social learning. The findings reveal that the absence of written guidelines, inconsistent use of long-term agreements, and weak process-based evaluation prevent community learning from becoming institutionalized and replicable.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical conceptualization that CSR in the Padang Lawas context is more appropriately understood as a community education ecosystem that is shaped, constrained, and directed by collaborative governance mechanisms, rather than merely as a corporate social intervention. This contribution shifts the analytical focus from the question of "what programs are implemented" toward "how governance produces learning," thereby opening an analytical pathway for designing CSR as a sustainable informal education strategy measurable through changes in community capacity, agency, and independence.

5 CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study confirms that the implementation of CSR by PT Permata Hijau Indonesia in Padang Lawas Regency has not yet been consolidated as a sustainable community education strategy, even though normatively such a space has been made available through the PHI Cerdas pillar and the expansion of program areas during 2022–2023. The findings indicate that the dominance of charitable and infrastructure-oriented approaches has shaped expectations of assistance, weakened meaningful participation, and confined social learning to partial and sectoral forms. Collaborative governance mechanisms that should generate collective learning through

deliberative forums, facilitative leadership, and clear institutional design have not yet functioned effectively, as decision-making remains largely centralized within the company, village government roles are primarily administrative, and communities are more often positioned as beneficiaries rather than learning subjects. This condition explains the tension between *das sein*, manifested in transactional CSR practices, and *das sollen*, which envisions CSR as social investment for capacity building, thereby constraining the transformation of CSR toward community education due to weak institutionalization of learning processes.

The recommendations of this study are directed toward strengthening CSR as a community learning ecosystem through improvements in collaborative governance that position education as a program objective rather than a by-product. Institutional design should be clarified through the establishment of regular collaborative forums involving the company, village governments, public service institutions, local organizations, and community representatives. Corporate facilitative leadership needs to shift from short-term project-based patterns toward staged mentoring accompanied by transition mechanisms that prepare groups for independence. The role of village governments should be enhanced from administrative functions to facilitators of deliberation and integrators of CSR agendas with village development plans.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of this research. We extend our deepest appreciation to Universitas Sumatera Utara for providing academic support and resources that facilitated this study. This research received no external funding. The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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