

Legal Awareness Training On Household Waste Management To Create Environmentally Conscious Villages (Green Villages): Strengthening The Role Of Community Complaint Centers

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ABSTRACT

Household waste management remains one of the most persistent environmental problems in Indonesian villages, where limited legal literacy, weak institutional coordination, and the absence of accessible reporting channels worsen the uncontrolled accumulation of domestic waste. This article examines legal awareness training as a strategy for building environmentally conscious villages, commonly known as "Green Villages," with particular attention to strengthening the role of community complaint centers as instruments of participatory legal enforcement. Using a normative juridical method supported by statutory and conceptual approaches, this study analyzes Law Number 18 of 2008 on Waste Management, Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service, and Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages as the normative foundation for community-based waste governance. The findings show that legal awareness training strengthens community capacity to recognize violations, understand their rights, and channel environmental grievances through structured complaint mechanisms, narrowing the gap between formal regulation and grassroots implementation. The novelty of this study lies in repositioning community complaint centers not merely as administrative service points but as instruments of legal empowerment bridging regulatory compliance and social accountability at the village level. The article recommends institutionalizing complaint centers through village regulations to sustain participatory environmental governance and strengthen legal certainty for rural communities.

Keywords: : legal awareness; household waste management; green village; community complaint center; environmental law

INTRODUCTION

The problem of household waste in Indonesia has grown into a chronic environmental burden that directly threatens the sustainability of village ecosystems, public health, and the quality of community life. Villages, which historically relied on natural absorption capacity and open burning to dispose of waste, increasingly struggle to manage the volume and composition of domestic refuse generated by growing populations, changing consumption patterns, and the proliferation of non-biodegradable packaging. Unlike urban areas, which generally possess formal waste collection infrastructure, most Indonesian villages still depend on informal disposal practices such as open dumping, uncontrolled burning, or discharge into rivers, all of which generate long-term ecological damage and expose residents to serious health risks (Widyanata et al., 2025). This condition is compounded by a persistent gap between the existence of a comprehensive legal framework and its actual implementation at the grassroots level.

Indonesia has, in principle, established an adequate normative foundation for waste governance through Law Number 18 of 2008 on Waste Management, which mandates an integrated approach encompassing waste reduction, reuse, and recycling

(the 3R paradigm), and through Government Regulation Number 81 of 2012 concerning the Management of Household Waste and Waste Similar to Household Waste, which further operationalizes the obligations of households, waste generators, and local governments. These instruments are reinforced by Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, which guarantees every citizen's right to a good and healthy environment and simultaneously imposes an obligation to preserve environmental sustainability. However, normative completeness alone has proven insufficient. Numerous empowerment programs report that villagers frequently lack even a basic understanding of these regulations, resulting in continued reliance on harmful disposal habits despite the existence of clear legal prohibitions (Indrastuti et al., 2026; Khoiruman et al., 2024). This gap between "law in the books" and "law in action" constitutes the central legal problem addressed in this study.

Legal awareness, understood as the community's cognitive and normative capacity to recognize a legal rule, comprehend its content, and internalize it as a guide for behavior, is a necessary precondition for effective law enforcement (Soekanto, 2008). Soekanto's theory of law enforcement factors identifies the legal substance itself, the law enforcement apparatus, supporting facilities, the community, and legal culture as five interdependent variables that determine whether a legal norm is genuinely implemented. In the context of household waste management, deficiencies are most visible in the community factor and the facilities factor: villagers frequently possess neither adequate knowledge of applicable regulations nor accessible channels through which to report violations or seek remedy. Consequently, even where local governments enact waste-related regulations, enforcement collapses because ordinary citizens have no functional mechanism to translate their grievances into administrative or legal action. Recent empirical studies confirm that legal counseling and structured training measurably increase household participation in waste-sorting, composting, and 3R practices, and that the effect is strongest when training is paired with a tangible institutional channel through which residents can report continuing violations or seek assistance (Pratyaningrum et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2025).

The concept of the "Green Village," as adopted in this study, refers to a rural settlement that has institutionalized environmentally responsible waste governance through a combination of community participation, local regulation, and supporting infrastructure such as waste banks, composting units, and waste-sorting facilities (Nugrahini et al., 2023; Gunawan et al., 2025). Programs implementing this concept across Indonesia, from waste bank initiatives in West Bandung and community-based waste strategies in Sambirejo Village, Pasuruan (Meirezaldi et al., 2025), to rocket-stove innovations in Cibaregbeg Village and hebel incinerators in Sindangpalay, demonstrate that technical intervention alone rarely produces lasting change unless it is accompanied by sustained legal education and institutional reinforcement (Nugraha et al., 2025; Maulana et al., 2026). Where legal awareness training has been integrated into these programs, communities exhibit stronger and more durable behavioral change, precisely because they understand not only the technical "how" of waste separation but also the normative "why," including their rights and obligations under national and local regulation (Susilo et al., 2025; Maslihah et al., 2025).

A further dimension that remains underexplored in the existing literature is the institutional architecture through which legal awareness is converted into sustained enforcement. Most community empowerment studies on household waste focus on socialization, training, or the establishment of waste banks as end products, without adequately addressing the mechanism through which communities can hold violators accountable or escalate unresolved problems to local authorities (Raharja et al., 2023;

Joleha et al., 2024). This is where the community complaint center becomes analytically significant. Article 65 and Article 66 of Law Number 32 of 2009 explicitly grant every person the right to participate in environmental protection and management, including the right to submit reports, complaints, and information regarding activities suspected of causing environmental pollution or damage. Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service further obliges public service providers, including village governments, to establish a complaint management system as part of minimum service standards, a mandate later technically supported by the national online complaint platform (SP4N-LAPOR!). Meanwhile, Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages affirms the principle of community participation and deliberation (*musyawarah desa*) as the foundation of village governance, providing a legitimate institutional space in which a village-level complaint center can be formally established through village regulation.

Despite this normative convergence, empirical studies on Green Village programs rarely examine complaint centers as a distinct object of legal analysis; they are, at best, mentioned as an incidental feature of broader waste bank or community empowerment schemes (Debrah et al., 2021; Udin et al., 2024). This creates a significant gap: legal awareness training is generally treated as a standalone educational intervention, disconnected from the institutional mechanism that would allow newly informed citizens to act on their awareness. The novelty of this article lies precisely in closing that gap. Rather than treating legal awareness training and complaint centers as separate strands of village environmental governance, this study conceptualizes them as a single, mutually reinforcing legal empowerment cycle, in which training builds the cognitive capacity to recognize violations and understand rights, while the complaint center provides the procedural channel through which that capacity is translated into enforceable action, accountability, and, ultimately, sustained institutional change at the village level.

This gap carries practical consequences that extend beyond individual villages. Where complaint mechanisms are absent or dysfunctional, environmental violations tend to persist unresolved until they escalate into social conflict, as residents who feel aggrieved by uncontrolled dumping or open burning by neighbors have no legitimate outlet through which to seek redress, and instead resort to informal confrontation or simply abandon the issue altogether (Rumanta et al., 2025). Law enforcement studies in West Sumatra and Denpasar likewise show that community-based monitoring functions effectively only when it is anchored to a clear reporting channel connected to local environmental agencies, since surveillance without an institutional endpoint produces no accountability (Negara & Senastri, 2024). This confirms that legal awareness and institutional access are not independent variables but function together as preconditions for effective grassroots enforcement, reinforcing the argument that the Green Village concept cannot rely on technical waste-processing infrastructure alone without an accompanying legal-institutional pillar.

Building on this foundation, this article seeks to answer three interrelated legal questions. First, how does the existing Indonesian legal framework position community complaint centers within the broader architecture of household waste governance. Second, what role does legal awareness training play in strengthening the functional capacity of complaint centers as instruments of community-based law enforcement. Third, what legal and institutional strategies can be recommended to integrate complaint centers into the Green Village model in a manner that is sustainable, legally binding, and responsive to community needs. By addressing these questions through a normative juridical lens, this study contributes both a doctrinal analysis of the relevant statutory framework and a practical model for strengthening participatory environmental law enforcement in rural Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a normative juridical (*yuridis normatif*) research method, which examines law as a coherent system of norms encompassing principles, rules, and doctrines relevant to household waste management and community-based legal enforcement. The analysis relies exclusively on secondary legal materials, comprising primary legal materials such as Law Number 18 of 2008 on Waste Management, Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service, Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, and their implementing regulations, alongside secondary legal materials consisting of legal scholarship, peer-reviewed journal articles, and community empowerment reports concerning Green Village and waste bank programs. Two complementary approaches are applied. The statutory approach (statute approach) is used to examine the internal coherence and normative hierarchy of the regulations governing household waste management and public complaint mechanisms, while the conceptual approach (conceptual approach) is used to construct an analytical framework linking legal awareness, community participation, and institutional enforcement through complaint centers. Data were collected through library research and systematically analyzed using qualitative descriptive-analytical techniques, allowing the identification of normative gaps between the formal legal framework and its implementation, followed by the formulation of legal and institutional recommendations for strengthening community complaint centers within the Green Village model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Normative Position of Community Complaint Centers within Indonesia's Waste Governance Framework

Indonesia's legal architecture for household waste management is built upon a layered normative structure that, read together, establishes complaint mechanisms as an integral rather than peripheral component of environmental governance. Law Number 18 of 2008 on Waste Management positions waste governance as a shared responsibility between government and community, obliging local governments to provide facilities and infrastructure for waste management while simultaneously granting communities the right to participate in the formulation of policy and to obtain information concerning waste management (Article 11 and Article 12). This dual structure of obligation and right is significant because it establishes the legal basis for citizens not merely to comply with waste regulations but to actively monitor their implementation. Government Regulation Number 81 of 2012 further operationalizes these obligations at the household level, requiring waste generators to sort waste at the source and imposing corresponding duties on village and sub-district governments to facilitate collection and processing, thereby creating multiple points at which non-compliance can, and should, be formally reported.

The most direct normative foundation for complaint mechanisms is found in Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management. Article 65 explicitly affirms that every person has the right to a good and healthy environment, the right to participate in environmental protection, and the right to submit reports and complaints regarding activities suspected of causing pollution or environmental damage. Article 66 reinforces this by granting legal protection to any person who exercises this right, ensuring that community members reporting violations, including household waste mismanagement, cannot be subjected to civil or criminal prosecution for exercising their

legal right to complain. This protective clause is critical for rural contexts, where residents often refrain from reporting neighbors or local enterprises out of fear of social retaliation; the statute's protective guarantee, if properly socialized, removes a significant psychological barrier to community-based enforcement (Maskun et al., 2024; Runtunuwu et al., 2026).

Some scholars situate this obligation within a broader ethical framework, arguing that community-based waste reporting reflects not only a positivist legal duty but also a value long embedded in local religious and customary norms of environmental stewardship, which reinforces rather than competes with the state's regulatory authority (Maskun et al., 2025). Complementing the environmental framework, Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service obliges every public service provider, including village governments functioning as the frontline administrative unit, to establish a complaint management system as one of the minimum standards of public service delivery. This obligation has since been technically reinforced through the National Complaint Management System (SP4N-LAPOR!), which is intended to integrate complaint channels across central, regional, and village government levels. At the village level, Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages provides the institutional legitimacy for establishing such a mechanism through *musyawarah desa* (village deliberation) and village regulation (*peraturan desa*), enabling communities to formalize a complaint center as a permanent institution rather than an ad hoc arrangement dependent on a single empowerment program. Read together, these four statutes converge on a single normative conclusion: a functioning community complaint center is not merely a desirable administrative feature of a Green Village but a legally mandated component of Indonesia's environmental and public service governance framework, whose absence constitutes a form of regulatory non-compliance by local government rather than a mere programmatic gap.

A further normative layer relevant to complaint-center design is Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number 14 of 2021 concerning Waste Banks, which formalizes waste banks as legal entities capable of receiving, recording, and channeling community reports on waste-related irregularities to local environmental authorities. Where a village already operates a waste bank, integrating the complaint function into its existing administrative structure, rather than creating an entirely separate institution, reduces implementation cost and leverages a channel with which residents are already familiar (Jabbar et al., 2026). This regulatory layering illustrates that Indonesian law does not require villages to build complaint infrastructure from nothing; it requires them to connect and formalize institutions, such as waste banks, that already possess partial complaint-handling capacity but currently lack explicit legal recognition of that function.

Legal Awareness Training as a Catalyst for Functional Complaint Mechanisms

Normative completeness does not automatically translate into functional enforcement, a discrepancy long identified by Soekanto's (2008) theory of law enforcement factors, which situates community awareness and legal culture as decisive variables alongside the legal substance itself. Empirical findings from community empowerment programs across Indonesia consistently confirm this pattern: villages possessing formal waste regulations but lacking legal literacy programs exhibit persistently low rates of compliance and virtually no use of available complaint channels, whereas villages that received structured legal counseling report measurable increases in both compliance and reporting behavior (Khoiruman et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2025).

Legal awareness training therefore functions as the missing link between the existence of a complaint mechanism and its actual utilization by the community it is meant to serve.

Three interrelated mechanisms explain this catalytic effect. First, legal awareness training clarifies the substantive content of applicable regulations, correcting the widespread misconception among rural residents that waste burning or informal dumping is merely a matter of habit rather than a regulated legal matter carrying administrative or criminal consequences under Law Number 18 of 2008 (Indrastuti et al., 2026). Second, training builds procedural literacy by explaining precisely how, where, and to whom a complaint should be directed, information that is frequently absent even where a complaint center nominally exists, resulting in underutilization despite institutional availability (Pratyaningrum et al., 2024). Third, and most significantly for sustained behavioral change, legal awareness training cultivates a rights-based orientation among residents, shifting their self-perception from passive recipients of government waste services to active holders of legal rights under Article 65 of Law Number 32 of 2009, entitled to demand accountability from both fellow residents and local authorities (Susilo et al., 2025; Maslihah et al., 2025). This shift in legal consciousness is what ultimately transforms a complaint center from a dormant administrative feature into a living instrument of participatory law enforcement, consistent with Satjipto Rahardjo's progressive law paradigm, which emphasizes that legal institutions attain their social function only when they are responsive to and internalized by the community they serve.

Comparative evidence from Green Village initiatives supports this conclusion. Programs that paired legal counseling with tangible institutional follow-up, such as waste bank management structures in Cikalong Village or rocket-stove and hebel-incinerator innovations in Cibaregbeg and Sindangpalay Villages, demonstrated substantially higher post-training compliance than programs offering technical training alone, precisely because participants understood both the ecological rationale and the legal stakes of continued non-compliance (Gunawan et al., 2025; Nugraha et al., 2025; Maulana et al., 2026). Conversely, programs limited to technical demonstration without a legal-institutional component, such as certain composting or ecobrick initiatives, reported a marked decline in community participation once external facilitation ended, underscoring that technical skill without accompanying legal ownership produces short-lived rather than sustainable behavioral change (Budiarti et al., 2025).

The distributive dimension of legal awareness training also deserves attention. Programs that specifically targeted housewives and other groups traditionally excluded from formal village decision-making produced disproportionately strong gains in both environmental compliance and complaint-center engagement, since these groups typically manage the household waste stream most directly (Maslihah et al., 2025). This finding resonates with a Rawlsian concern for equitable participation: a complaint mechanism that is formally open to all but practically accessible only to village elites or male household heads fails to achieve genuine legal empowerment. Effective legal awareness training must therefore be deliberately designed to reach primary waste-management actors, ensuring that the resulting complaint center reflects and serves the community members most affected by household waste governance.

Institutionalizing Complaint Centers within the Green Village Model: Toward Sustainable Legal Enforcement

Translating the preceding normative and empirical findings into a sustainable governance model requires addressing three structural weaknesses commonly found in existing Green Village programs. The first weakness is institutional discontinuity: most

complaint mechanisms established during community empowerment activities are informal and dependent on the presence of university facilitators or non-governmental partners, causing them to disappear once the program concludes (Raharja et al., 2023; Joleha et al., 2024). This study recommends that village governments formalize complaint centers through village regulation (*peraturan desa*), thereby anchoring the mechanism in binding local law under the authority granted by Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, independent of any external program's continuity. A formalized *peraturan desa* should specify the complaint center's organizational structure, reporting procedures, response timeframes, and its integration with the village's environmental management unit, ensuring institutional permanence irrespective of leadership turnover.

The second weakness concerns procedural accessibility. Complaint mechanisms modeled solely on formal written reporting are poorly suited to rural contexts characterized by lower digital literacy and dispersed settlement patterns (Widyanata et al., 2025). Aligning with the participatory spirit of Law Number 6 of 2014, village complaint centers should adopt a hybrid design combining a physical reporting post, integration with existing waste bank administrative structures, and a simplified digital channel connected to SP4N-LAPOR!, thereby satisfying the public service obligations of Law Number 25 of 2009 while remaining accessible to residents with limited technological capacity (Jabbar et al., 2026).

The third weakness lies in the disconnect between complaint submission and enforcement follow-through, echoing findings from community-based monitoring models in West Sumatra and Denpasar, where reports of waste violations frequently went unanswered due to unclear referral pathways to local environmental agencies (Negara & Senastri, 2024; Akhmaddhian et al., 2021). To remedy this, this study recommends embedding a clear escalation protocol within the village regulation, specifying that unresolved complaints are automatically referred to the sub-district Environmental Agency (*Dinas Lingkungan Hidup*) within a defined period, consistent with the administrative sanction mechanisms envisioned under Law Number 32 of 2009. Administrative sanctions, rather than criminal prosecution, should be prioritized as the primary enforcement instrument at the village level, both because they are more proportionate to typical household violations and because empirical evidence indicates administrative measures achieve higher compliance rates than punitive criminal approaches in the waste management sector (Maskun et al., 2024).

Taken together, these three interventions, institutional formalization, procedural accessibility, and enforcement continuity, constitute the operational core of what this study terms the legal empowerment cycle for Green Villages. Legal awareness training generates informed and rights-conscious citizens; the community complaint center provides the institutional channel through which that awareness becomes actionable; and village regulation supplies the binding legal architecture that sustains the mechanism beyond the lifespan of any single empowerment program. This integrated model directly addresses the novelty identified in the introduction, offering both a doctrinal justification and a practical institutional pathway for transforming community complaint centers from an incidental feature of waste bank programs into a central pillar of participatory environmental law enforcement in rural Indonesia

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Indonesia's legal framework, comprising Law Number 18 of 2008 on Waste Management, Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Service, and Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, already provides a sufficient normative basis to position community

complaint centers as a legally mandated component of household waste governance, rather than an optional supplement to Green Village programs. The persistent gap between this normative framework and its implementation is not primarily a defect of the law itself but a deficit of legal awareness and institutional continuity at the village level. Legal awareness training functions as the essential catalyst that converts passive legal entitlement into active civic participation, equipping residents with the substantive knowledge, procedural literacy, and rights-consciousness necessary to use complaint mechanisms meaningfully, particularly when such training deliberately reaches primary waste-management actors such as housewives rather than village elites alone. Sustainable transformation, however, requires more than training: it demands the formal institutionalization of complaint centers through village regulation, procedural designs that accommodate rural accessibility constraints, and clear escalation protocols linking village-level reporting to sub-district environmental agencies. Integrating these three elements, legal awareness, institutional formalization, and enforcement continuity, into a single legal empowerment cycle offers a replicable model for strengthening participatory environmental law enforcement across Indonesian villages. Future research should empirically test this model through longitudinal studies measuring complaint-center utilization rates before and after legal awareness interventions, in order to validate the causal relationship proposed in this normative analysis and to refine its applicability across villages with differing socio-legal characteristics.

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