

Legal Awareness Socialization for the Bontonmpo Community through a *Siri'*-Based Approach in Tamallayang Gowa

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ABSTRACT

Legal awareness plays a central role in shaping orderly, responsible, and harmonious community life. In many local contexts, however, legal education becomes more effective when communicated through values that are already socially meaningful to the target community. This community service activity was conducted to strengthen legal awareness among the people of Bontonmpo through a cultural approach based on *siri'*. The activity took place at the Tamallayang Village Office, Bontonmpo District, Gowa Regency, and was implemented in the form of socialization. The program was designed in response to the need for legal education that is contextually relevant to local society while also addressing the tendency to overuse and overclaim the concept of *siri'* in social discourse. The implementation involved preparation, identification of general community needs, material delivery, interactive discussion, and simple evaluation. The results indicate an increased public understanding of the importance of legal awareness and a stronger recognition that cultural values may support legal education when applied proportionally. The activity also demonstrates that *siri'* can function as an ethical and communicative bridge in explaining legal responsibility, provided that it is not positioned as a singular or exhaustive solution to complex social and legal issues.



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INTRODUCTION

Legal awareness constitutes one of the fundamental elements in the creation of an orderly and responsible social life. In principle, law is not merely a formal system of rules established by institutions, but also a normative framework that regulates rights, obligations, conduct, and social interaction within society (Commaile et al., 2018). The effectiveness of law in everyday life is therefore closely related to the degree to which people understand, respect, and internalize legal values. A society with stronger legal awareness is generally better equipped to maintain public order, avoid unnecessary conflict, and resolve social problems through accepted norms and procedures (Ewick & Silbey, 1998).

In the context of community life, legal awareness should not be reduced to knowledge of written regulations alone. It also includes moral sensitivity toward rights and duties, recognition of the consequences of unlawful conduct, and willingness to act in accordance with social and legal norms (Güdük & Desmet, 2022). For this reason, efforts to improve legal awareness at the community level are highly important, especially in local settings where legal understanding may be shaped not only by state law but also by custom, tradition, and inherited ethical values (Hilbink & Salas Ramos, 2024).

Community-based legal education is therefore a significant part of social empowerment. Through educational activities such as socialization, discussion, and public engagement, communities may develop a more practical understanding of how law relates to their daily lives. Such an approach becomes particularly relevant when legal messages are conveyed through concepts that are already familiar to the social world of the participants. In this regard, cultural values may serve as an entry point for legal education, helping communities relate formal legal principles to their lived experience in a more meaningful and accessible way (Olatokun, 2022).

The people of Bontonompo are situated within a socio-cultural environment strongly influenced by Bugis-Makassar values and patterns of social interaction. Like many communities in South Sulawesi, social life in Bontonompo is not solely organized through administrative and legal structures, but also through cultural norms that guide interpersonal conduct, communal expectations, and social dignity. These cultural norms often continue to shape how individuals understand responsibility, respect, and acceptable behavior within their environment (Badewi, 2019).

Although *siri* holds important cultural significance, its use in social, public, and even academic discourse often raises conceptual concerns. In many discussions, *siri* is invoked repeatedly to explain a broad range of social attitudes, behaviors, and community problems. This tendency may result in what can be described as overuse, namely the excessive or uncritical application of the concept across different contexts without sufficient clarification of its specific meaning and limits. As a result, *siri* risks becoming a generalized label rather than a carefully interpreted cultural value..

A related concern is overclaim. In some narratives, *siri* is presented as though it possesses an almost total explanatory or corrective power over social life. Such a view may lead to the assumption that cultural values alone are sufficient to address problems that are, in fact, legal, structural, institutional, or educational in nature. This is problematic because legal awareness cannot be developed only through appeals to moral symbolism. It also requires basic understanding of rights, obligations, applicable norms, and the role of law in public life (Kadir, 2026).

Accordingly, the use of *siri* in community service activities must be undertaken with caution. It should be approached as a culturally meaningful ethical framework that may support legal communication, not as a singular or all-encompassing solution to social disorder. A proportional use of *siri* is therefore necessary in order to preserve its cultural depth while avoiding romanticization, simplification, or conceptual inflation in legal and social education initiatives (Maddukelleng & Muhammad, 2021).

The present community service program was implemented in the form of socialization because this method is particularly suitable for the delivery of normative, educational, and context-sensitive material at the community level. Socialization allows facilitators to communicate ideas in a direct, dialogical, and accessible manner, making it appropriate for themes such as legal awareness, social responsibility, and cultural values. Unlike narrowly technical training, socialization creates space for explanation, reflection, and exchange of views between presenters and participants.

This format is also relevant because the issue addressed in this activity concerns not only information transfer but also value clarification. Legal awareness is more likely to develop when participants understand how legal norms relate to their own social environment. Through socialization, legal messages may be presented in language that is closer to everyday experience, while cultural references such as *siri* may be discussed critically and constructively (Kadir et al., 2026). For that reason, socialization was considered the most appropriate form for linking legal understanding with local cultural perspectives in the Bontonompo community.

This article contributes in three ways. Practically, it offers a model of community legal education that is responsive to local cultural context. Conceptually, it argues for a proportional use of *siri* in legal awareness initiatives, thereby avoiding overuse and overclaim. Academically, it adds to the discussion on culturally grounded community service by showing that local values may strengthen public legal education when employed as supportive ethical frameworks rather than as exclusive explanatory tools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service activity was conducted at the Tamallayang Village Office, located in Bontonompo District, Gowa Regency. The selection of this location was based on its relevance as an accessible public space for community-oriented activities and as an administrative setting closely connected to the daily social life of local residents. Conducting the program in the village office also supported a formal yet familiar atmosphere, allowing legal awareness material to be delivered in a setting that participants could easily identify with.

The target participants of the activity were members of the Bontonompo community. The program was directed toward the general public rather than a narrowly specialized group because legal awareness is a broad social issue that concerns everyday relations, civic responsibility, and shared norms within community life. The choice of the community as the primary target reflected the view that

legal education becomes more meaningful when it is situated within ordinary social experience and communicated in ways that are understandable and relevant to local cultural conditions.

The activity was implemented in the form of socialization, which was considered the most appropriate method for communicating legal awareness in a direct, participatory, and context-sensitive manner. Socialization was selected because the main purpose of the program was not to provide technical legal training, but to introduce, explain, and strengthen public understanding of the importance of law in social life. Through this format, participants were expected to engage not only with legal concepts in a general sense, but also with the moral and cultural dimensions that shape their understanding of responsible conduct.

The approach used in the activity was educative, persuasive, and cultural. It was educative because the program focused on increasing participants' understanding of legal awareness and its relevance to daily life. It was persuasive because the delivery emphasized reflection, dialogue, and the internalization of legal values rather than mere instruction. It was cultural because the discussion incorporated the concept of *siri'* as a local ethical reference point familiar to the Bontonmpo community (Mappaselleng & Kadir, 2025). However, *siri'* was positioned only as a supporting cultural medium for communication, not as the sole framework for explaining legal order or resolving legal issues.

The implementation of the program was organized into four main stages: preparation, identification of general community needs, socialization delivery, and simple evaluation. The first stage was preparation. At this stage, the team determined the central theme of the activity, namely legal awareness in community life through a proportional cultural approach based on *siri'*. The preparation phase also involved organizing the content of the material so that it could be presented clearly, systematically, and in language suitable for community participants. In addition, basic coordination with the local setting was necessary in order to ensure that the activity could be carried out properly at the designated venue.

The second stage involved the identification of general community needs. Since the program was community-based, the material needed to reflect the social context of the intended participants. This stage focused on understanding the general condition that legal awareness in society is often intertwined with local values, moral expectations, and inherited cultural expressions. It was also recognized that while *siri'* remained familiar in social discourse, its connection to legal awareness needed to be explained more carefully and proportionally. Therefore, the material was adjusted to respond not only to legal themes in an abstract sense but also to the actual cultural language through which the community interprets responsibility and public conduct.

The third stage was the implementation of the socialization session. During this phase, participants were introduced to the importance of legal awareness, the role of law in maintaining social order, and the relevance of responsible behavior in community life. The presentation also discussed *siri'* as an ethical and cultural value that may support legal awareness when understood in relation to dignity, accountability, and self-respect. The session was conducted in a communicative manner, allowing participants to listen, reflect, and engage in interactive discussion. This stage was essential because it created a direct link between legal concepts and the cultural framework that participants already recognized in everyday life.

The fourth stage consisted of simple evaluation. Given the nature of the activity, evaluation was carried out through observation of participant engagement, attentiveness during the session, and general responses expressed in discussion. This evaluation did not rely on complex quantitative instruments, but rather on qualitative indications of comprehension and participation. Through this process, the team obtained a general picture of how the material was received and how the cultural approach contributed to participants' understanding of legal awareness.

The main materials presented in the activity covered several interconnected themes. First, the session explained the general meaning of legal awareness as a form of public understanding of law, rights, obligations, and the importance of normative order in social life. Second, the material addressed the role of legal obedience in maintaining responsibility, security, and social harmony within the community. Third, the discussion highlighted the relationship between law and daily social interaction, emphasizing that law is not separate from ordinary life but directly connected to how individuals behave toward others. Fourth, the concept of *siri'* was introduced as an ethical and cultural value that may help explain why responsible and lawful conduct matters in a socially meaningful context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Siri'* as a Cultural Approach in Legal Education

Before the implementation of the community service activity, the general condition of the target community indicated the continued importance of social norms in regulating everyday behavior. As members of a society shaped by local cultural traditions, people in Bontonompo were already familiar with ideas related to respect, social propriety, dignity, and communal responsibility. These values informed how individuals positioned themselves in relation to family, neighbors, and the wider social environment. In that sense, the community did not stand outside normative order; rather, it already possessed a moral framework through which behavior was evaluated and judged.

However, this pre-existing normative framework did not necessarily translate into a structured understanding of legal awareness. The values that guided conduct were more commonly recognized in social and ethical terms than in the language of legal rights, obligations, and institutional norms. This suggests that while the community was not unfamiliar with principles of order and responsibility, the legal dimension of those principles still required reinforcement. Legal awareness, in this context, needed to be introduced not as an abstract body of rules detached from everyday life, but as an integral part of social conduct and public responsibility (Flora et al., 2025).

Another notable initial condition was the strong familiarity of the community with the concept of *siri'*. This concept appeared to occupy a meaningful place in local social discourse, especially in relation to honor, shame, dignity, and the maintenance of personal and collective reputation. Yet, its frequent invocation in various social contexts also indicated the possibility that the concept had become too broad in everyday use. As a result, the community service activity entered a context in which *siri'* was already socially resonant, but its relation to legal awareness had not been systematically articulated. This condition confirmed the need for an educational approach capable of bridging legal concepts with local moral language without collapsing one into the other.

The socialization activity was conducted at the Tamallayang Village Office as a community-oriented educational session focusing on legal awareness and its relation to local cultural values. The implementation followed the general structure prepared in advance, beginning with the introduction of the topic, followed by the explanation of key legal awareness concepts, and then continued through a discussion of *siri'* as a cultural frame that could help participants understand legal responsibility more concretely. The village office setting proved suitable for such an activity because it represented both an official and socially accessible venue for public discussion.

During the session, the material was delivered in a communicative and explanatory manner. Rather than presenting law as a purely technical subject, the discussion emphasized its practical relevance in daily interactions, social order, and responsible participation in community life. This approach helped reduce the distance that often separates legal discourse from the ordinary experiences of community members. By linking legal awareness to familiar social realities, the activity allowed participants to reflect on law not merely as state regulation, but as a framework that supports mutual respect, obligation, and collective harmony.



Figure 1. Public dialogue and material delivery sessions.

The use of *siri'* in the session did not function as a rhetorical ornament, but as a contextual medium to explain why lawful and responsible behavior has ethical significance in community life. Participants were encouraged to consider that preserving dignity and social respect may also involve compliance with legal norms and awareness of rights and duties. The interactive nature of the discussion was important because it created room for participants to interpret the material in relation to their own experiences. This also enabled the activity to function as a dialogical process rather than a one-way transfer of information.

From an implementation perspective, the socialization activity demonstrated that legal education at the community level is more effective when it takes account of local interpretive frameworks. The field process showed that participants responded more attentively when the discussion was grounded in concepts that were already familiar within their social environment. At the same time, the activity maintained an academic and educational orientation by ensuring that cultural references were linked back to legal understanding rather than allowed to stand as vague symbolic expressions (Ilyas et al., 2022).

One of the most important findings of this community service activity lies in the role of *siri'* as a cultural approach to legal education. In the Bontonmpo community, *siri'* possesses social intelligibility because it is embedded in everyday moral understanding. It is commonly associated with self-respect, personal honor, social shame, dignity, and the obligation to maintain one's standing before others. These dimensions make *siri'* an effective communicative bridge for introducing legal awareness, particularly in contexts where legal discourse may otherwise appear distant or overly formal.

Used proportionally, *siri'* can support legal education by providing a locally meaningful moral vocabulary through which legal responsibility becomes easier to grasp. When individuals understand that social dignity is also connected to responsible conduct, respect for others, and accountability within public life, they may become more receptive to the broader significance of law. In this sense, *siri'* does not replace legal reasoning, but helps frame legal norms within a cultural language that is already intelligible to the community. This is especially valuable in community service settings, where the aim is not merely to transmit information but to encourage reflection and internalization.

The relevance of *siri'* in this activity also lies in its capacity to connect the social and the legal without forcing an artificial separation between them. In many communities, legal obedience is not experienced simply as submission to formal authority; it is also interpreted through moral expectations, relational duties, and public reputation. By referring to *siri'*, the socialization session was able to show that lawful behavior has an ethical dimension tied to how one lives with others in a shared environment. This made the discussion of legal awareness more concrete and more socially grounded (Sihombing et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the use of *siri'* required conceptual caution. The activity did not treat *siri'* as a direct synonym for law, nor as an all-purpose explanatory principle. Such an approach would risk reducing both the legal and cultural dimensions involved. Law has institutional, procedural, and normative aspects that cannot be fully absorbed into a cultural value system, while *siri'* itself has historical and moral complexity that should not be simplified into a single legal message. Therefore, the strength of the activity lay not in idealizing *siri'*, but in placing it carefully as a supportive ethical framework that could help make legal education more contextually meaningful.

This finding suggests that local culture may serve as a constructive foundation for community legal education when employed with analytical restraint. The value of *siri'* in this program was not that it offered a complete theory of law, but that it opened a communicative pathway through which legal awareness could be discussed in a language the community already recognized. In this regard, *siri'* functioned best not as a total explanation, but as a culturally resonant medium for legal reflection.

2. Improvement of Legal Awareness after the Socialization Activity

The main result of the activity was the indication of improved legal awareness among participants following the socialization session. This improvement should not be interpreted in an exaggerated or statistically absolute sense, especially because the evaluation relied on qualitative observation rather than complex measurement instruments. Nevertheless, the activity provided meaningful indications that participants developed a stronger understanding of why legal awareness

matters in everyday life and how it relates to social responsibility within the community (Yuspin et al., 2023).

One visible outcome was the increased recognition that law is not limited to formal state authority or distant institutional procedures. Through the socialization session, participants were encouraged to view law as something that also shapes ordinary relations, public order, and the practical conduct of individuals in society. This shift in understanding is important because legal awareness often remains weak when law is perceived as remote from lived social experience. By presenting legal norms in relation to familiar patterns of responsibility and mutual respect, the activity made legal awareness more comprehensible and socially relevant.

Another significant outcome was the strengthening of participants' understanding that responsible social conduct and legal consciousness may reinforce one another. The discussion of *siri* helped participants see that maintaining dignity and honor is not only a matter of social appearance, but may also involve compliance with norms that protect order and fairness in community life. In this way, the session encouraged a more integrated view of morality, culture, and law. Rather than separating legal responsibility from local values, the activity showed that both may interact productively when framed carefully.

The observed increase in legal awareness was also reflected in the quality of participation during the session. Engagement, attentiveness, and responsiveness in discussion suggested that participants were not merely listening passively, but were actively relating the material to their own social context. Such participation is an important indicator in community-based educational activities because it reflects emerging comprehension and reflective involvement. While this form of evidence remains qualitative, it is nonetheless meaningful in assessing the immediate educational impact of socialization-based community service.

Overall, the improvement produced by the activity may be understood as a strengthening of legal consciousness at the level of understanding and reflection. The results do not claim that all legal problems can be resolved through a single socialization session, nor do they suggest that cultural framing automatically transforms public behavior. Rather, they indicate that a carefully designed educational activity can contribute to the gradual development of legal awareness by making legal ideas more socially intelligible and culturally resonant.



Figure 2. Together with the implementing team, resource persons, and participants in community service activities after the implementation of public dialogue on increasing legal awareness based on *siri*' values.

The participants' responses to the approach used in this activity can generally be characterized as positive and receptive. The cultural framing of legal awareness through *siri* appeared to make the material more accessible and easier to relate to everyday life. Because *siri* was already a recognizable concept within the local social environment, participants did not encounter the topic as something entirely foreign or detached from their experience. This familiarity contributed to a more communicative and less formal atmosphere during the session (Hatimah et al., 2021).

In addition, the use of a cultural point of entry encouraged participants to engage with legal material in a more reflective way. Rather than perceiving legal awareness as an external body of rules imposed from above, participants could discuss it through concepts linked to responsibility, dignity, and social conduct. This helped create a sense of relevance that is often essential in community service activities. The positive response, therefore, was not only directed toward the content itself but also toward the method of delivery, which successfully connected abstract legal ideas with locally meaningful ethical references.

A central analytical aspect of this activity is the need to critically address the tendency to overuse and overclaim the concept of *siri*'. Although the concept remains culturally important, its repeated and expansive use in many social discussions may weaken rather than strengthen its analytical value. When *siri*' is applied to nearly every issue without careful distinction, it risks becoming a vague cultural slogan. Such overuse can flatten the complexity of the concept itself and obscure the specific nature of the problems being discussed.

Overclaim presents an even more serious challenge. If *siri*' is described as though it alone can explain or solve legal and social problems, then structural, institutional, and educational dimensions may be neglected. Legal awareness depends not only on moral values but also on understanding legal norms, rights, obligations, and the operation of public order. A community service activity that relies too heavily on cultural glorification may therefore fail to strengthen actual legal literacy (Batubara & Arifin, 2020).

This program deliberately avoided such tendencies by positioning *siri*' as a supporting ethical framework rather than a complete solution. This proportional use is important not only methodologically but also academically. It preserves the significance of local culture without turning it into an exaggerated explanatory device. In doing so, the activity demonstrates that cultural values may enrich legal education precisely when they are used carefully, critically, and within clear conceptual limits.

The results of this activity have broader implications for community service programs that seek to use local culture as a foundation for public education. First, they show that cultural values may enhance the communicative effectiveness of socialization activities by making normative material more intelligible to local communities. Second, they indicate that culturally grounded approaches are most useful when they remain proportional and do not replace the substantive content of the topic being addressed. In the present case, *siri*' was effective because it supported legal education rather than overshadowed it (Dewi Pulung Sari & Suryawati, 2023).

More broadly, this activity suggests that community service programs in culturally rooted societies should not ignore local value systems. At the same time, such values must be integrated with analytical discipline and contextual sensitivity. This balance allows local culture to function as a meaningful educational resource while preserving the conceptual clarity and practical purpose of the community service intervention.

CONCLUSION

Legal awareness in community life may be strengthened through a socialization program that is responsive to local cultural context. Conducted in Tamallayang, Bontonompo District, the activity shows that the use of *siri*' as a cultural approach can support the communication of legal values in a way that is more socially meaningful and accessible to the community. The results indicate that participants developed a better understanding of legal awareness not merely as obedience to formal rules, but as part of responsible social conduct connected to dignity, accountability, and communal order. In this respect, the activity confirms that culturally grounded legal education may function effectively when legal concepts are related to values already recognized within everyday social life.

At the same time, the activity also underlines the importance of using *siri*' in a proportional and critically informed manner. The concept should not be overused as a generalized label for every social issue, nor overclaimed as a singular solution to complex legal and societal problems. Instead, *siri*' should be positioned as a supportive ethical framework that helps communities engage with legal awareness more reflectively. Therefore, the main contribution of this activity lies not only in promoting legal understanding among the Bontonompo community, but also in offering a balanced model of community service that integrates local cultural values with substantive legal education. Future

activities of a similar kind may be further developed through broader participation, more systematic evaluation, and continued adaptation to the social realities of local communities.

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