



An Overview of Community Protection System in Sunsari District, Nepal

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Geneva

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Situation of Children & Women in Nepal

- Population of Nepal: 25 million [Female – 50.04%, but in some places outnumber men by 3:2]
- **Population below 5 years – 3.5 million**
- Population below 18 years – 12.2 million
- **Over 1 million do not attend school**
- Approx 2.6 million children aged 5-14 regularly work in Nepal
- **5,000 girls aged less than 15 years are involved in commercial sex work**
- 12,000 girls are trafficked annually [20% are below 16 years of age]
- **Child marriage before the age of eighteen is at 40%**
- Over 5,000 children living in the streets
- **Over 8,000 children between 12-18 years associated with armed forces & armed groups**

Problems of Children & Women in Nepal

- Domestic & Social Violence
- **Trafficking**
- Child marriage
- **Child labour**
- Sexual abuse
- **Rape**
- Harmful Traditional Practices: *Chhaupadi, Deuki, Jhuma*
- **Children Affected by AIDS**
- Children Affected by Armed Conflict

Causes for the problems of women & children

- **Gender Discrimination**
- **Social norms & values**
- **Discriminatory laws & practices**
- **Illiteracy & Poverty**
- **Weak system/state presence at local level**

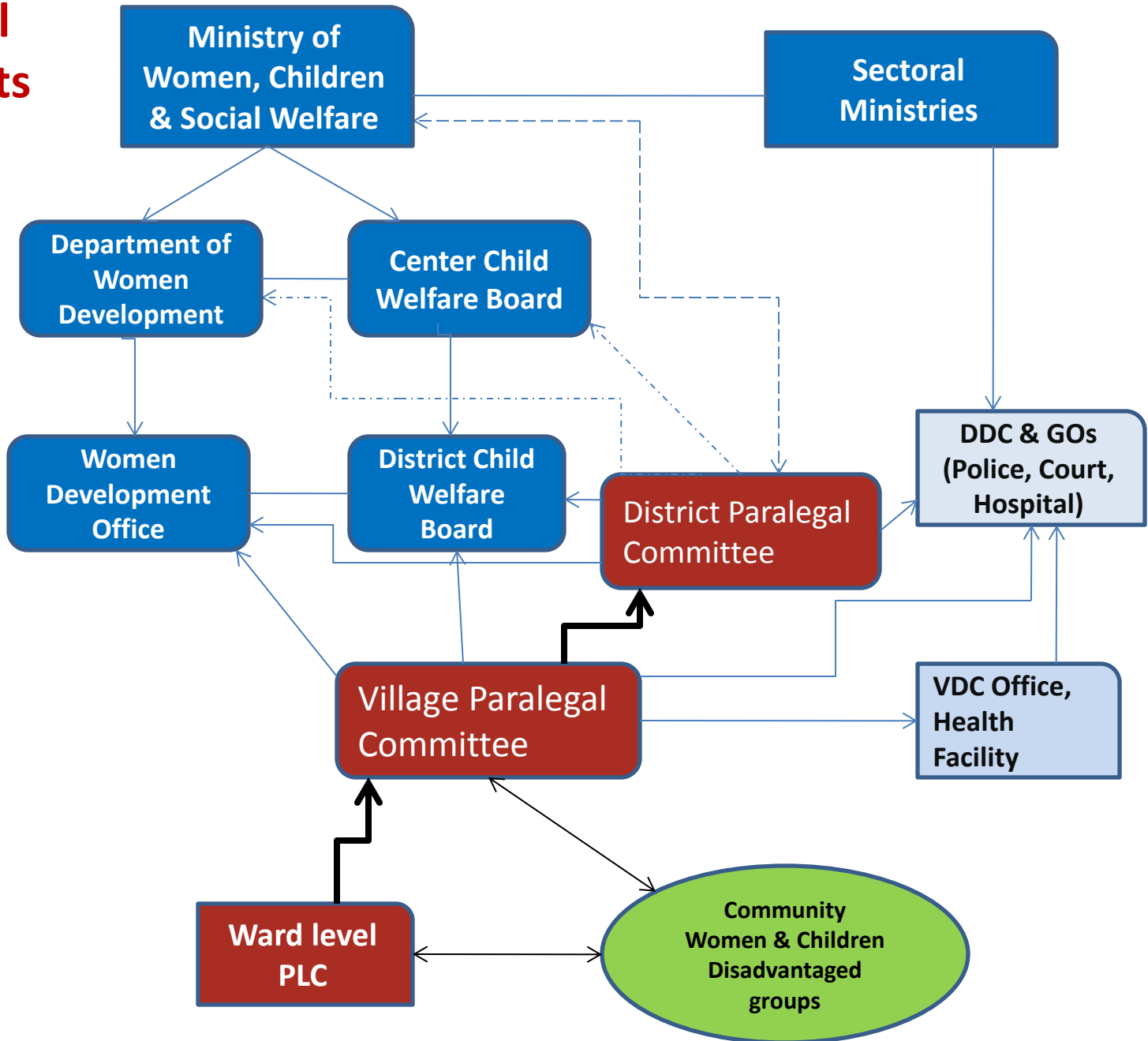
Institutional Arrangements

National level

District level

Village Level

Ward Level





Para-legal Committees (PLC)

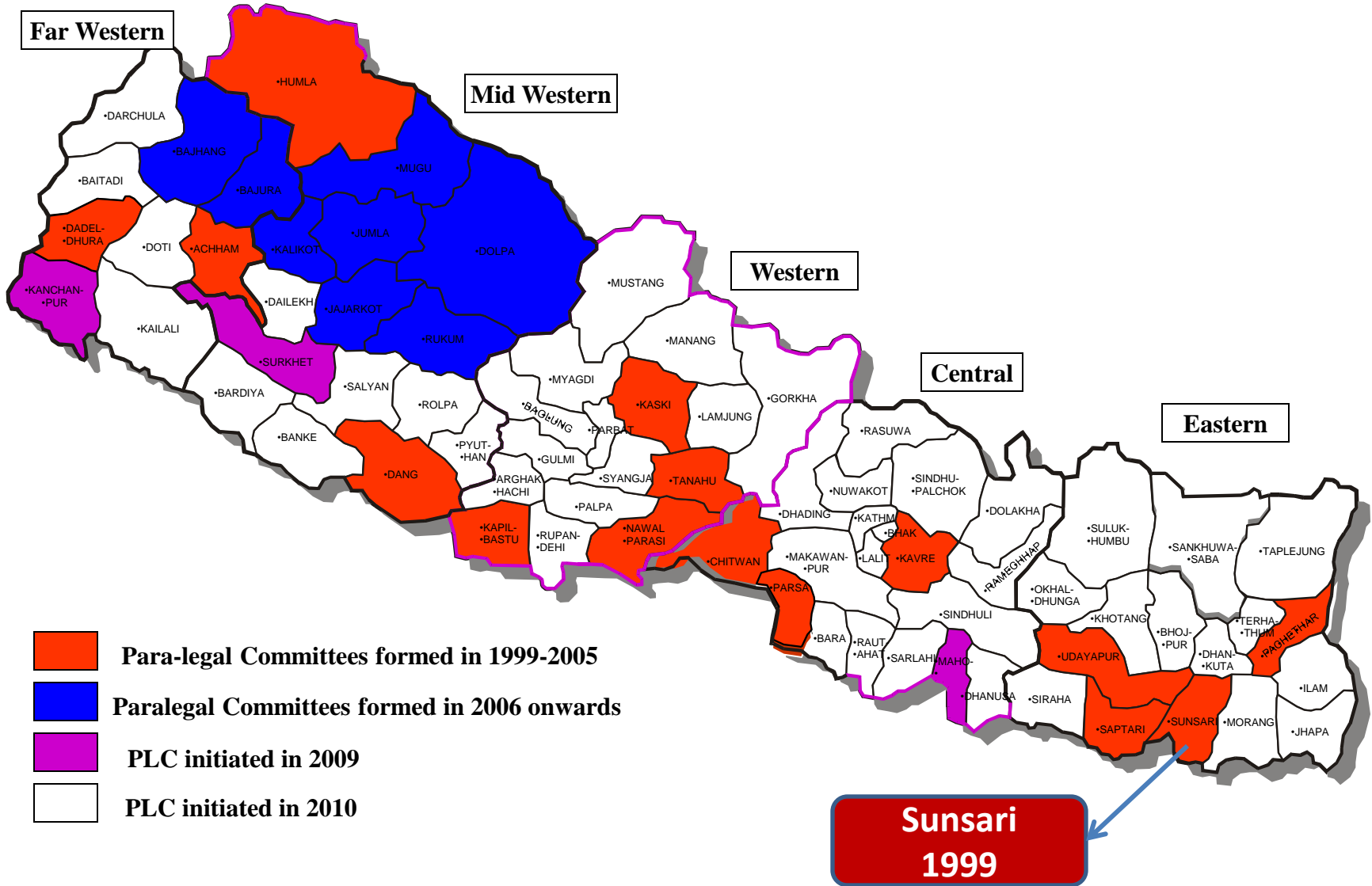
Para-legal committees are **community-based protection mechanism** with basic knowledge on the rights of the children and women, who work against the **violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination against women & children.**



Objectives of Para-legal Committees

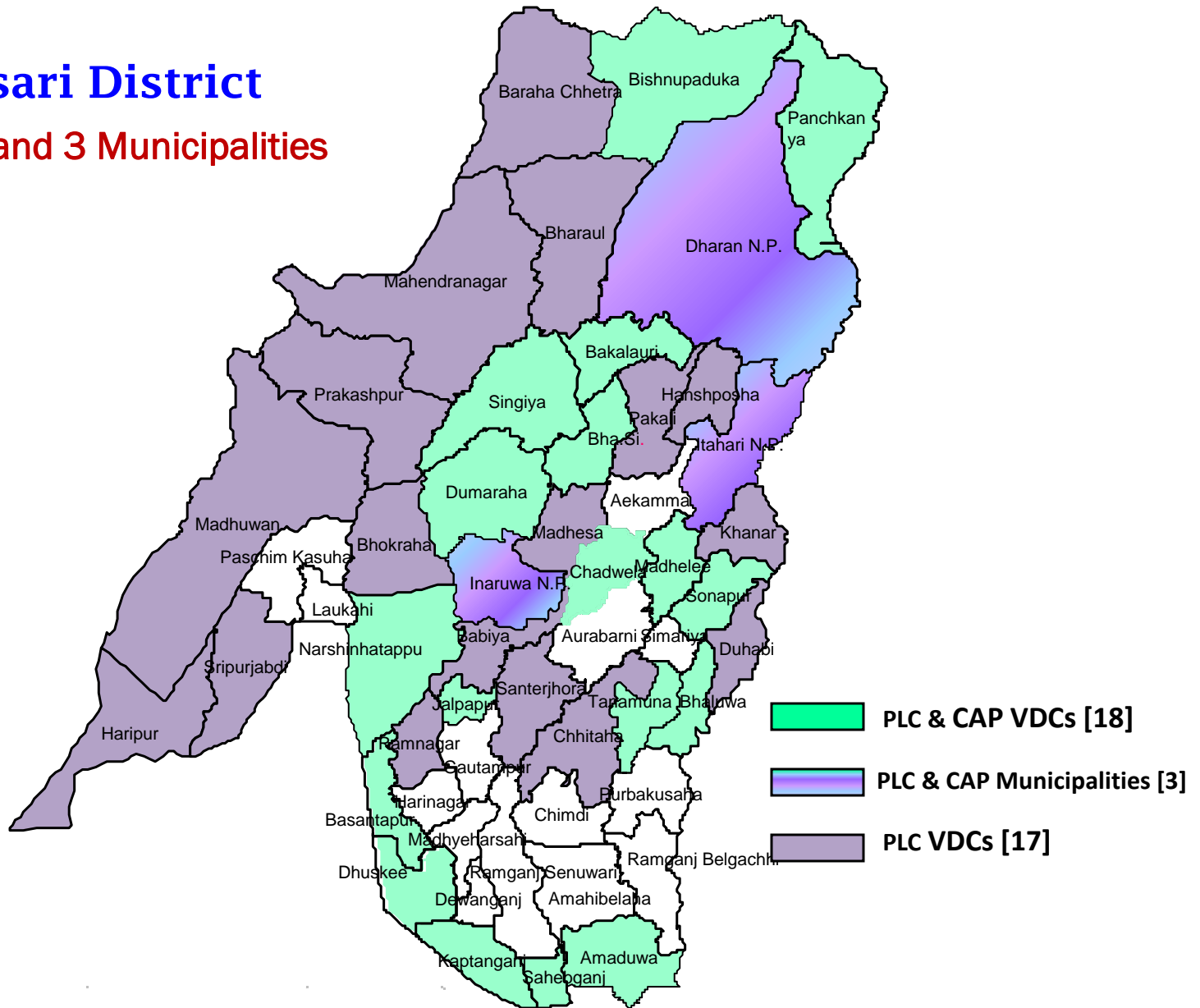
- Awareness Raising
- **Early detection & prevention**
- Case Facilitation- from reporting to reconciliation
- **Mediation of simple case & Follow up**
- Referral of serious ones & crimes
- Monitoring and Reporting

Para-legal Committees in Nepal (supported by UNICEF)



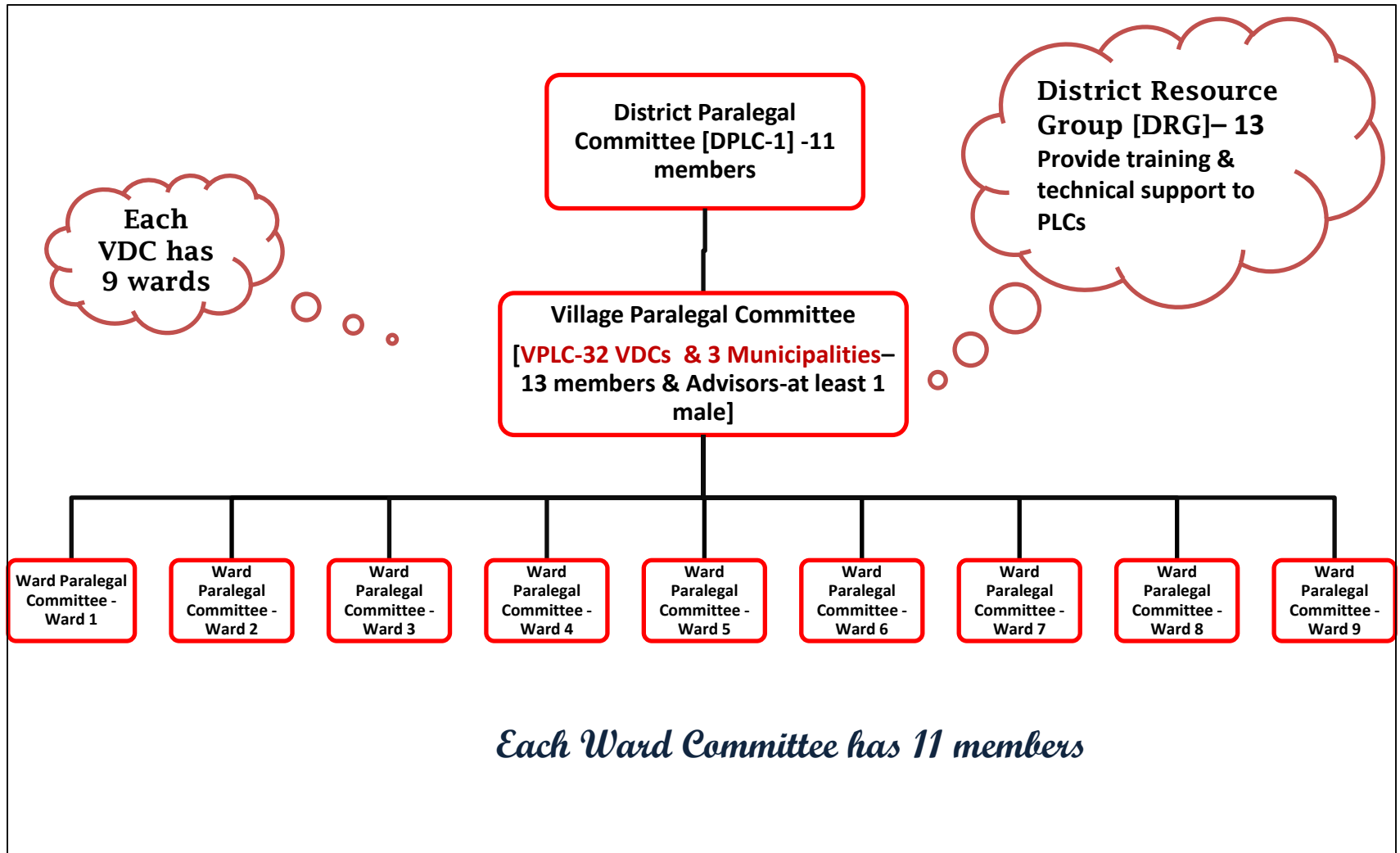
Sunsari District

49 VDCs and 3 Municipalities

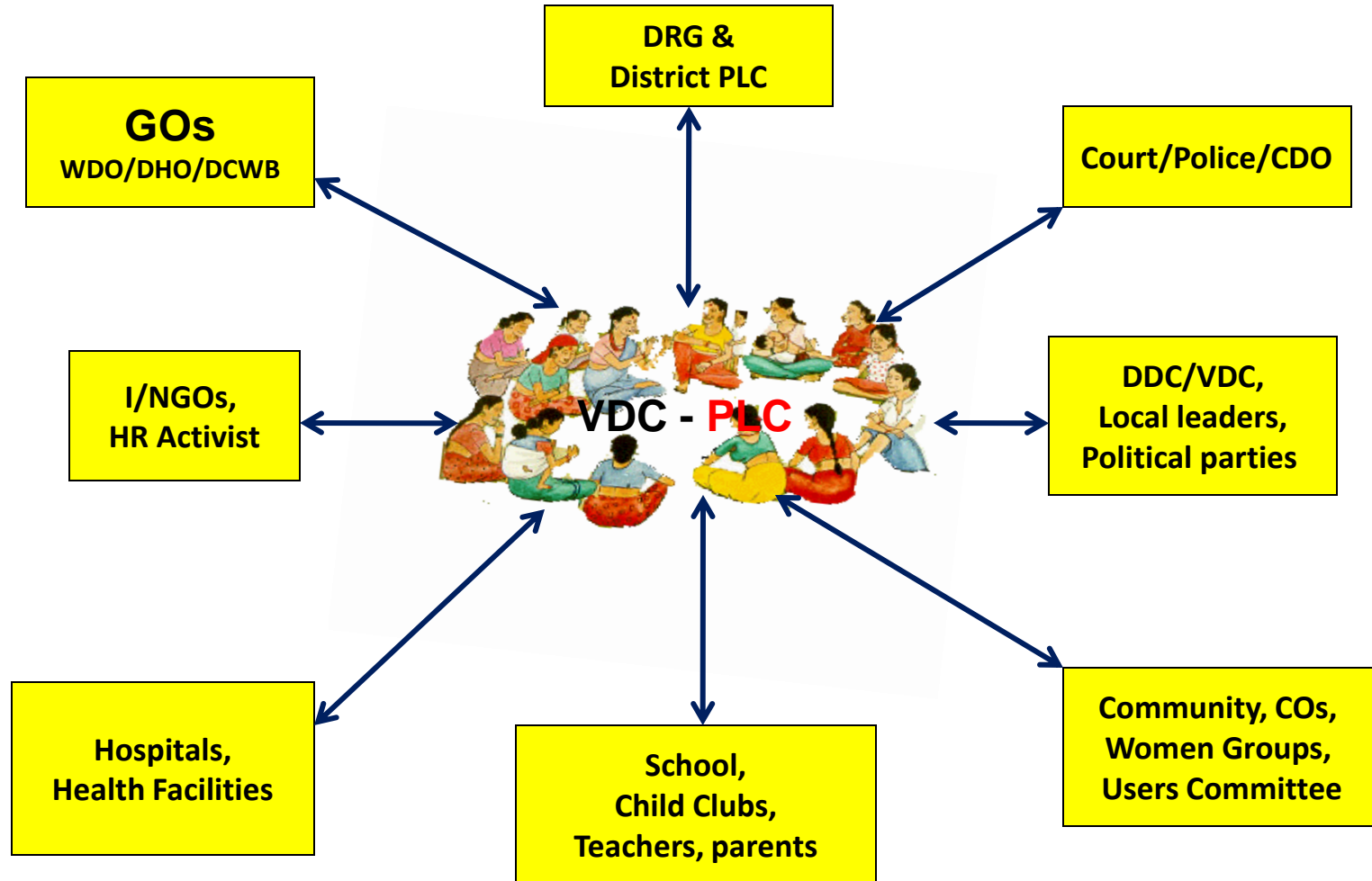


PLC in 35 VDCs and 3 Municipalities

Organizational Structure of PLC



PLC - Linkages & Coordination



Paralegal Committee in Figure

Nepal

Total Population: 25 million

Total District: 75

Total VDC: 3,913

Total Municipalities: 58

Village PLC: 717 /23 Districts

Planned by 2013: 1,300 /75 Districts

Total DRG Members: 207

Total VDC PLC Members: 9321

Sunsari

Total Population: 625,633

Total VDC: 49

Total Municipality: 3

District PLC: 1

Village/Municipal PLC: 38

Ward PLC: 261

Total DRG Member: 13

Total Village PLC Members: 463

[17% Disadvantaged Groups]

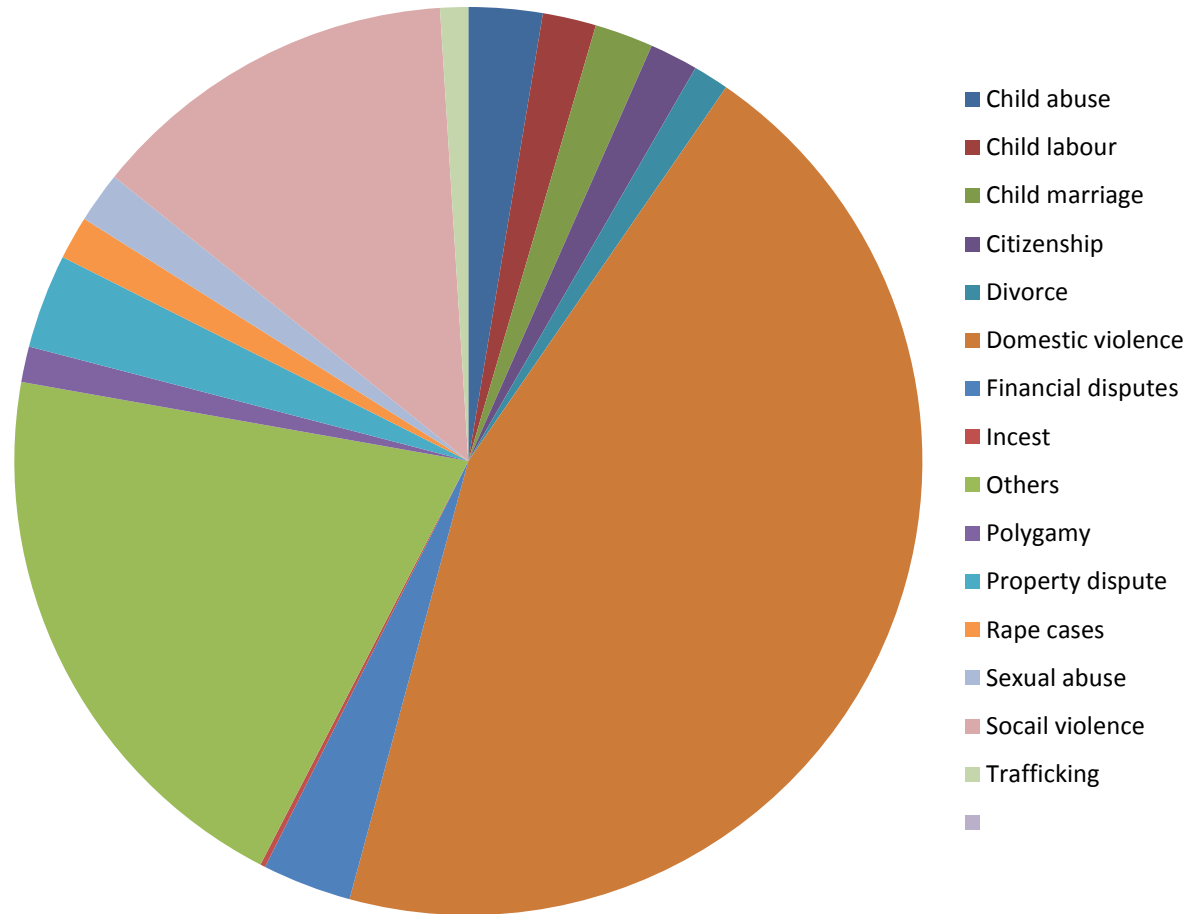
Total Ward level PLC Members : 2,871

Type of cases registered in PLC

District: Sunsari

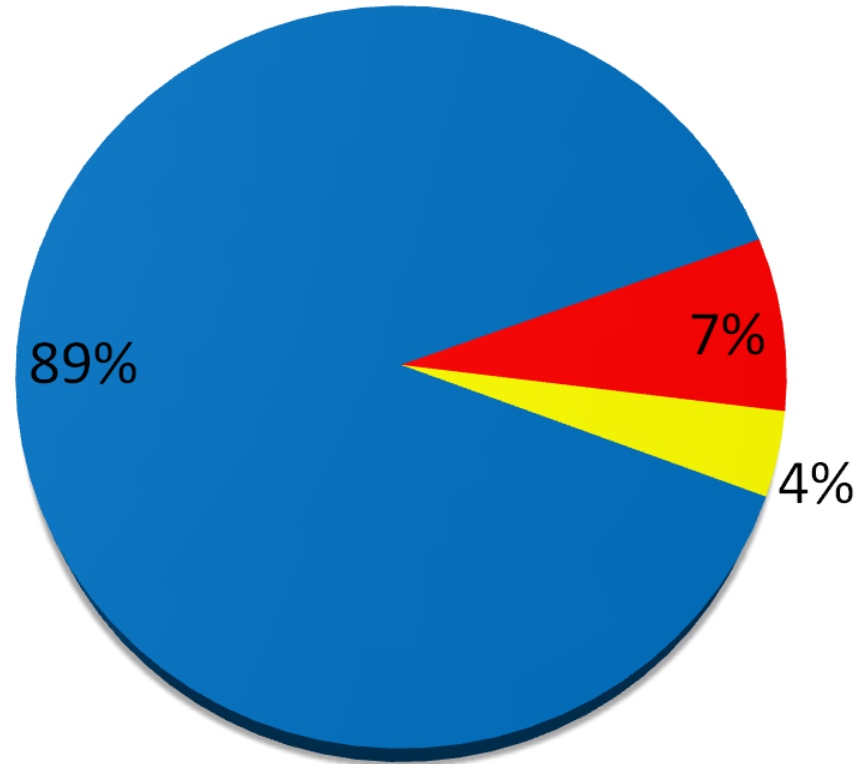
Jan-June, 2010

Category	No	%
Child abuse	29	3%
Child labour	21	2%
Child marriage	23	2%
Citizenship	19	2%
Divorce	14	1%
Domestic violence	492	46%
Financial disputes	35	3%
Incest	2	0%
Others	223	21%
Polygamy	14	1%
Property dispute	37	3%
Rape cases	17	2%
Sexual abuse	20	2%
Socail violence	146	14%
Trafficking	11	1%
Total	1074	



702 cases solved by PLCs & 372 are Referred

Age-wise cases registered in PLC



■ >18 girls

■ >18 boys

■ women

Key Features of PLC (1)

- **Attitude Change & Capacity Building** - PLCs help to change the attitudes that exist within the society through different interventions while at the same time building the capacity of the protected system.
- **Community-based Approach** - Undertaken by members of community themselves.
- **Led by Women** - PLCs comprise only women members. Leadership and all the process undertaken by women.
- **Inclusive Membership** - Selected from all sections of community, all wards, representation of disadvantaged groups
- **Providing Access to Justice** - PLCs providing access to justice for rural and poor women & children by supporting them for free legal aid services and follow up support.



Key Features of PLC (2)

- **Complementary Provision** - PLC is complementary to, and not a replacement for, the formal justice system - filling a gap between Community and Service providers
- **Act as Watch Groups** - PLCs have acted as watch groups against violence of women & children during the normal and emergency periods. Facilitate reporting of 'hidden cases' (domestic violence, sexual violence) to Police
- **Neutrality & Volunteerism** - PLCs have always maintained political neutrality & working for women & children. Hence, were able to operate during the period of armed conflict in the country. All the PLC members are working voluntarily.
- **In Depth Training** - 24 days intensive training on women's and children's rights, international conventions, Nepali legal code, mediation skills.





Some issues/Challenges in PLC

- Threats to PLC members by conflicting parties.
- Threats to guardians especially in reporting the young girls case.
- Increasing no. of rape cases on young girl child.
- Reporting of children's cases.
- Need to focus prevention & awareness among parents, young girls & community [curative v/s preventive].
- Weak protection services at District level for referred cases.
- Extending the programme throughout the country (even by 2013 only 33% of the country will have a PLC)



Case no. 1

- Three Girls (12,14,15 Years) from disadvantaged community of Sunsari were convinced and brought by their own relative (Aunt) to Kathmandu for domestic work. Later on, they were forced to work in Cabin Restaurant for commercial sex work.

Somehow, one of them, contacted Paralegal Committee (PLC) and with the help of PLC that case was reported to the police. The case was then exposed to the family members & community. With the support of PLC, all the three girls were freed. The aunt was imprisoned and the girls were provided NRs. 25,000 as compensation.



Case no. 2

- A man has raped a woman & a 3 yrs old girl, but neither case was reported to PLC, nor exposed to anyone. The family members & the relatives hide those cases in the name of social prestige & norms. As a consequence, he was encouraged to attempt such cases time & again. After a few month, he again raped his own baby niece aged just 16 months. This case was then reported to the PLC by her mother. The PLC has supported her to report the case to the police. The PLC coordinated with District Resource Group to provide free legal aid service for the family. The crime was then proved and the man was imprisoned by the Court.

The PLC & Women Development Office have provided the medical support for the baby.



PLC members in rally during International Women's Day



District officials & political leaders during the review of PLC



PLC members working in a group during training



VDC Secretary addressing the participants during external visit at PLC



Thank you