

### Early and Forced marriage in Ghana

- Positive steps:
  - Children’s Act (Act 560,1998) prohibits child marriage
  - The Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), DSW; CHRAJ and DOVVSU have official mandates to protect children from early and forced marriage.
  - Media has been active in reporting on child marriage
  - NGOs/CBOs have taken action and support initiatives

Sweden – the country in the world with the highest average age of marriage.....but it has not always been so.....

Queen Sofia Magdalena of Sweden, married at age 15	Queen Karin Mansdotter of Sweden, married at age 17	Queen Fredrika of Sweden, married at age 16
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### Early and Forced marriage in Ghana

Despite efforts.....

- Annually, 34,000 girls under the age of 18 are married

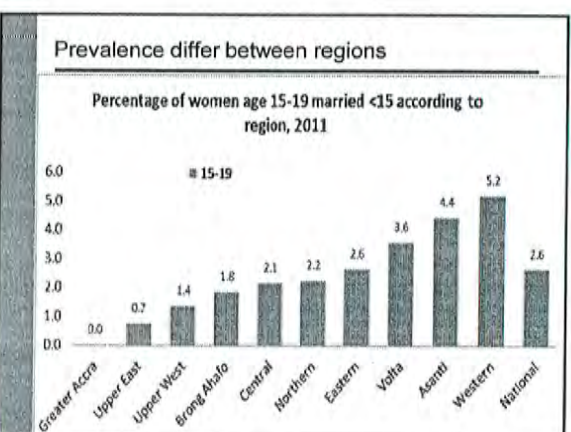
Threat to Ghana’s social and economic development

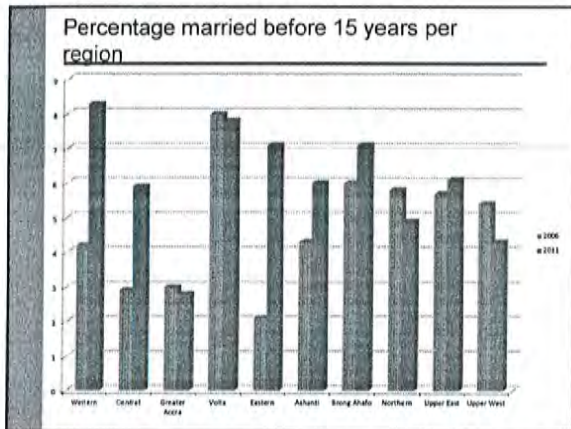
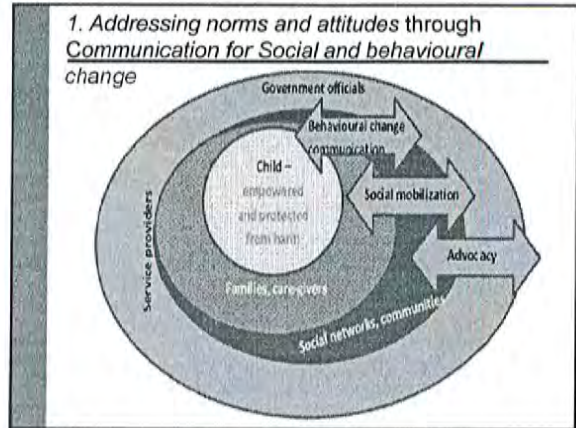
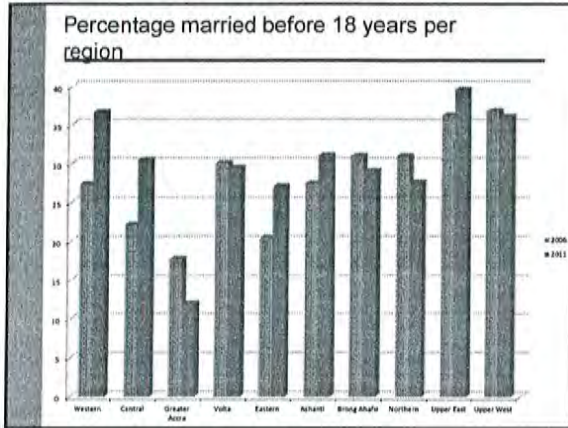
- The problem persists in all regions across the country
- Child marriages more common in rural areas.
- Women with high education and from wealthier households are less likely to get married before age 15 years.
- Prevalence differs between regions

### What changed the situation of early marriage?

- Women given equal rights as men by Act of Parliament in 1820
- As poverty was reduced, less girls were forced into marriage;
- Industrialization created greater job opportunities for girls and women;
- Compulsory free basic education for all – boys and girls

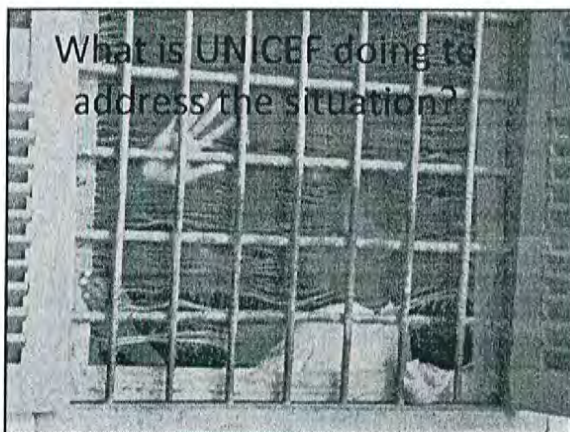
Three are proven strategies that work – we don’t have to reinvent history!





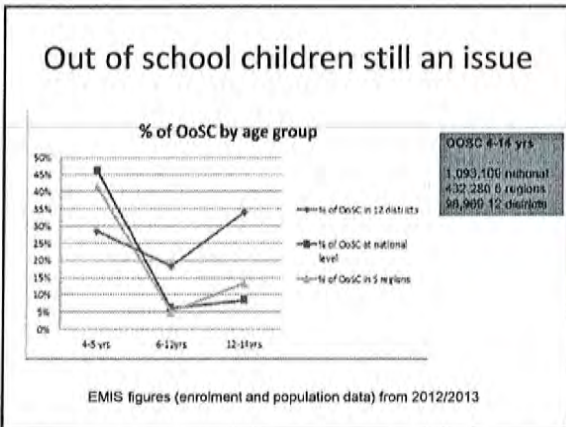
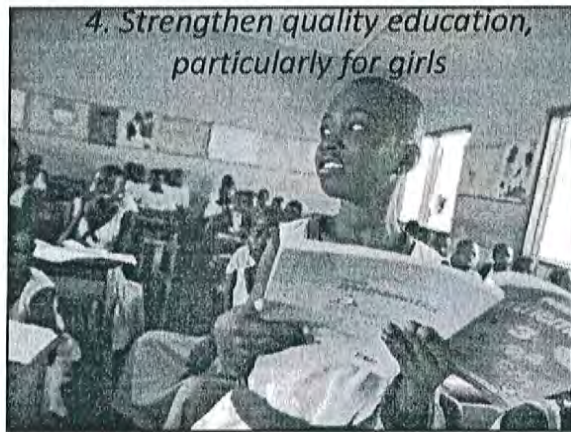
**2. Strengthening birth registration system to help enforce the law**

- In recent years, average birth registration rates have stagnated at around 65%
- Some regions register less than 25% of children under 5 years



**3. Policy and legislative reform**

- New Child and Family Welfare Policy and Justice for Children Policy is in the pipeline – will help reform the child protection system overall, making it more appropriate and 'fit' for the context of Ghana;
- Legislative reform, amendments to Children's Act and Juvenile Justice Act expected, commencing in 2014



**Role of Parliamentarians:**

- 1. Legislate!**
  - You can approve, and initiative, laws that govern society in a structured manner.
  - New Child Protection Policy framework will require legislative changes of Children's Act and Juvenile Justice Act.
- 2. Allocate financial resources wisely!**

Allocate resources to the government wisely and monitoring government spending, especially for programmes addressing child protection issues, including child marriage
- 3. Advocate!**

As opinion leaders and representatives of the people, you can play an important advocacy role, raising awareness on protection issues in your constituencies and at national and international levels.

**4. Strengthen Education**

**UNICEF supports:**

**Education access**

- Out-of-school children
- Awareness/demand raising through C4D
- Children with special needs including those with disabilities

**Education quality**

- Effective teaching and learning
- Safe and protective learning environment
- School leadership, management and community engagement