



WorldYWCA

16 Ancienne Route
CH-1218 Grand Saconnex
Geneva Switzerland

Telephone (+41) 22 929 60 40 | info@worldywca.org

Call to action **Leave no one behind**

While most young girls were busy playing, five-year old Maria, from Trinidad & Tobago, was meeting her future husband. At age nine, she was married, and by age 11 she was pregnant—the first of 25 pregnancies. In Trinidad and Tobago, although the legal age for civil marriage is 18, girls as young as 12 are still getting married based on religious exceptions.

Poverty leaves little room for dignity. Even worse – it leaves a lot of space in each stomach to try to fill. It is hard for families to care for many children, and the easy way is to have one of those cherished children taken in by another family. But the price we pay for that kind of relief is too high, and it is the young daughter, the child we should be protecting, who is paying it.

Children are the future we must cherish for. Every little girl and little boy must be protected and not treated as a commodity. Let us find a strong voice to name what is dark, so that it may be changed. Religious leaders have the responsibility to speak up and denounce this harmful practice. Being indifferent to this issue means reinforcing the cycle of poverty, which affects not only individuals but the whole community. You are educators and have the power to change hearts and minds. Now is the time for action, leave no one behind.