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My name is Sylvana Rincon, I am a student at NYC College of Technology. My work involves a cultural, ideological and political issue that to this date is still happening throughout the world. Child marriage is a problem that exists especially in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries where macho ideas are very entrenched. Child marriage is an issue that is being overlooked by many, yet it endangers the life of many children. There is lack of information in these communities regarding all the consequences that child marriages bring. The life of many kids is stopped with child marriage by being forced to assume adult responsibilities, restricting them from education and recreation. Girls are the most vulnerable in these situations. Girls are forced to be housewife, bear children and stop attending school. As a consequence, they become dependent of their husband because they are not proficient to find a paid job. Additionally, girls are forced into intimacy by their husband, putting their lives in danger. A great number of the girls that become pregnant before 18 years old have a higher risk of mortality and many suffer from fistula during labor. Girls are not only sexually assaulted but, in many cases, they are also physically abused by their husband and even family members. Furthermore, children also suffer from depression because they feel isolated by their friends and immediate family. Child marriage has many causes, in a great number of cases is poverty, girls are seen as burden because of the gifts paid by the bride's family to the husband; girls are sold like another good. The girls have no saying in who or when they will get married. Moreover, ideological and cultural beliefs support child marriage because of fear of girls getting pregnant before marriage. Girls are married out in many cases even before they hit puberty, as early as 9 years old, without an understanding of the situation. In a great majority of countries child marriage is illegal; although, weddings are still held at night to avoid the law. However, there is very little to no follow up from the legal authorities in cases where the law is broken.

With this presentation I intend to provide awareness to the parents and children. I also try to persuade parents to give the opportunity to the children to finish school. I believe that education and job opportunities will provide a better quality of life. Also, if more girls continue education, the gender inequality gap will decrease; specially in third world countries where women are still dictated what to do. The purpose of my work is to bring information to those who ignore how these kids' lives are being changed and put in jeopardy. Children are being denied their rights, they are being denied their childhood. Additionally, my intention is to bring together the government and non-profit organizations to provide opportunities. These children and their families need a light of hope and I believe with education and job opportunities a change could be achieved. It is time for child marriage to stop for good, children's rights must be respected.