



ConnectEd, the signature program of the Alcatel-Lucent Foundation, is a three-year global initiative that addresses the factors limiting the work and life options of disadvantaged youth. This program serves 17,866 young people from marginalized communities in Australia, Brazil, China, India, and Indonesia with an emphasis on young women.

Lizzie's Big Smile: Community in the Kitchen

Lizzie left school after Year Nine at sixteen years old when she felt she didn't fit in. That's when Lizzie found the *ConnectEd* program, which has been supporting at-risk young people in disadvantaged communities to reach their educational and social potential. By offering young people opportunities to engage with accredited vocational training, practical skills and work experience, they begin to see how they help themselves, their family and make a contribution to the wider community.

Lizzie's mother Yvette and sister Valerie attended Lizzie's Hospitality Training graduation ceremony to celebrate this significant milestone in her life.



Valerie said she's seen a big change in Lizzie who was "quite shy and withdrawn" before the course. Her sister said, *"When we walked in today I saw Lizzie's whole face light up with a big smile - it was good to see how much more confident she is... she wants to go straight on and do another course."*

Lizzie feels much more confident about her abilities, and said she loved "learning skills." She said that she never felt good at school and that she just didn't fit in, but participating in the *ConnectEd* program, she found that she loves learning and is looking forward to learning more.



Older sister Valerie said they hoped Lizzie would avoid the trap for early school leavers of hanging around with friends, watching videos and living off unemployment benefits. It seems *ConnectEd* is fulfilling that hope: Lizzie has since enrolled in another hospitality course to further her skills.

As a result of the program, Lizzie now has the skills and confidence to take control of her future.