

Moscow, Russia: Irina Vanyan wins UPF's Miss University 2019 Competition

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Moscow, Russia -- The Mister and Miss University competition was a piece of our lives that was filled with good and bright moments. For six months we participated in volunteer projects and gave joy to people. We all became good friends. And now it's hard to believe that it's over.

"Every finalist is a creative and talented person. The main thing is that all these people truly love their work," said Natalia Lopatyuk, the second runner-up in the 2019 competition.

The finale of this year's competition was held on April 27. The themes covered international relations and traditions. The 12 contestants were students from the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Russian republics of Bashkortostan and Altai, and the neighboring nation of Belarus.

Over the course of six months, the participants worked together on a number of volunteer projects and visited various religious sites, including the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Jewish Museum.

Because they lived far away from each other, participants used Zoom calls for numerous roundtables and communication. Sharing their thoughts and experiences and expressing their opinions helped everyone to increase self-knowledge and to develop their maturity.

The contestants were mentored by participants of past competitions (the organizing committee). Every week these senior comrades offered their time to help the participants to prepare for the finale, conducting rehearsals and training the dancers. They came up with the general concept of the concert.

Participants were very grateful to their mentors, and the mentors, in turn, praised their diligent pupils.

"Until the last moment, I could not believe that the finale was about to begin. After the fanfare, I was overwhelmed by the feeling of an incredible holiday. Stunning guys and an amazing atmosphere left their imprint on my life." -- Pavel Shlyakhin, Mister University 2015.



"Every participant is my family member. You are worried for everybody, you feel nervous for everyone, and you want all of them to win the crowns and cups. I didn't worry so much for myself when I was a participant a year ago, but this year, being an organizer, these are completely different emotions. You feel great responsibility for each participant, for the script, behind the scenes, and much more. However, all together, all projects, events and rehearsals, communication and creativity are being perceived quite internally. We feel as one body; we think and work harmoniously. We were very happy to meet wonderful people from Belarus, Ufa, St. Petersburg. A wondrously bright year, very rich in impressions! We have gained experience and kindness. This pageant is not just a competition; it is a family." -- Nastasya Titova, the first runner-up of the 2018 competition.

The participants and organizers were unanimous in claiming that nothing would have happened without Elena Knyazeva, the director of the competition. One participant said: "It was Elena who created such a sincere and warm atmosphere. At rehearsals you feel at home. We were getting food and drink, all our problems were solved, all kinds of advice was given. 'Mama Lena' is a real friend. We are grateful to her for this contest!"

We are confident that in the future such contests will retain this wonderful atmosphere and fervent spirit!