



beyond

# BEYOND COMPETITION

Ruth Ninajanty, photo Yudi P

**A COMPETITION IS LIKE A  
MINIATURE VERSION OF THIS  
WORLD. – ALYSSA MAHARANI**





Alyssa Maharani is ready for anything. She has tried out for every single competition possible, from singing and fashion shows to math and debates at the Model United Nations. "I don't always win, of course. Sometimes I get the trophy, sometimes I don't. I just go for it," the 15-year-old told HighEnd teen quite matter-of-factly. Her spirit of competition is something to learn from.

Alyssa started competing when she was in kindergarten, but the first competitions and trophies are a blur to this Global Jaya Student. "I always thought the first trophy came from a fashion show when I was five, but you should ask my mom about it. I barely remember," she said with a laugh. Her mother, Mrs. Linda, said Alyssa and her older sister, Tiffany, used to compete together when they were in pre-school. Unlike Alyssa, who would jump into any opportunity to add a trophy to her pile, her now 19-year-old sister was never as eager to compete, outside of with her sister of course.

Most of Alyssa's trophies are from fashion shows, but that doesn't mean she likes walking the catwalk best. "When I was little, fashion shows were the most popular competition out there," she explained. "Especially when it came to celebrating Indonesia's Independence Day." From traditional to modern fashion, Alyssa has done it all.

But what motivates such competitive spirit? "I loved wearing nice dresses and you get to do that at fashion shows," she admitted of her early modeling career. Of course, there is also the trophy.

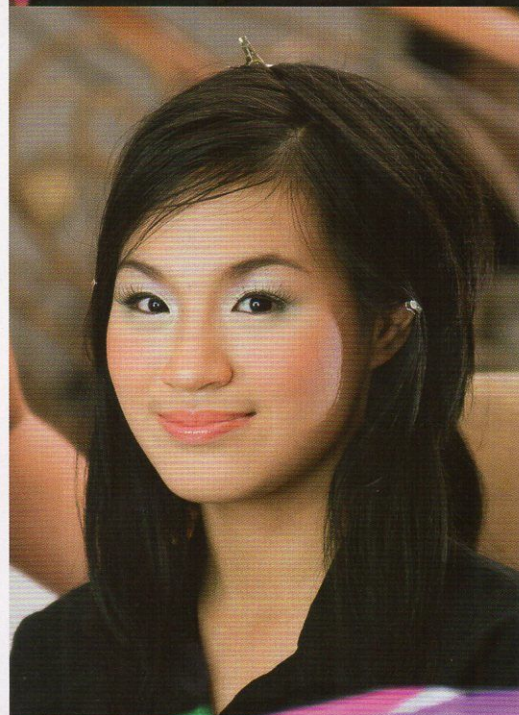
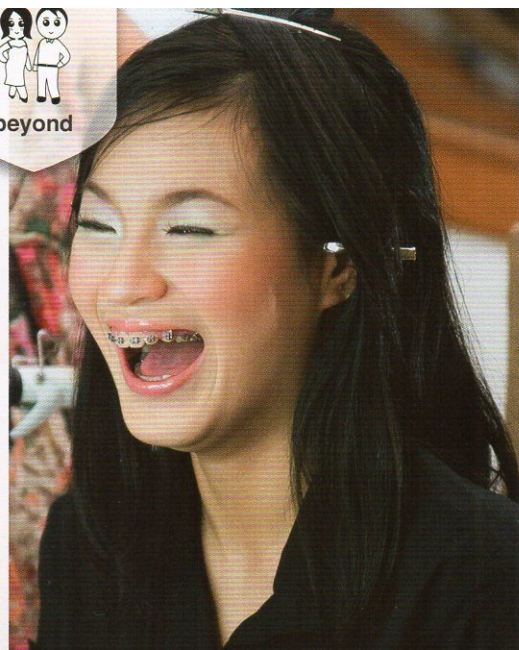
"There were times when I jumped into a competition just because I saw how big the trophy was! Sometimes I want to win so badly... but in the end it's more about the experience."

Participating in fashion shows has taught Alyssa a lot, especially that life is not always so fair. From the big fashion shows she has learned to accept defeat from judges who chose students from their own modeling classes, instead of treating all contestants equal. In another show, she learned that, sometimes to get a big trophy, you just have to pay the right amount of cash - those who wanted to compete fairly, including Alyssa who won first place, had to be satisfied with a mini trophy from another competition that as competed honestly. But of course, this Global Jaya scholarship recipient has always competed fair and square.

There are other lessons learned too, like hanging in to the end. The studio where Alyssa is studying encouraged her to apply to the young Abang and Nene Jakarta competition in 2003. Alyssa had to study a lot, including how to greet people in the Batavian way, current issues in Jakarta and the details of her traditional clothing. She was prepared, but that didn't lead to a smooth competition day for the then 11-year-old Alyssa. Everything that could go wrong that day did.

"I was late choosing the number, so, since no one picked number one, I was the first contestant to be on stage," she recalled with some disbelief at just how bad it was. "Then, I was so nervous that I forgot to do the proper greeting. The emcee had to remind me,





'Where's your greeting?' Fortunately, I was fine on stage. Once backstage, I was crying and wanted to go home."

Fortunately, Alyssa stuck it out and was announced the None Jakarta Cilik. "I guess that's because I was more like a kid than other contestants," she remembers. Winning the None competition opened many other opportunities for her, including writing for a national newspaper and being an emcee in front of former president Megawati.

Being competitive doesn't mean Alyssa doesn't know how to have fun. When she was shooting for TPI in 2002, for example, she remembers having a blast. "It was fun! I met new friends everywhere and we played hide-and-seek on location until the director was mad at us for playing too much. But we're kids, right? So it doesn't feel like work or competition or anything else. It feels like we're playing around."

So what's Alyssa's favorite competition so far?

"Math competition at school, because afterwards we get to eat free pizza!" she admitted with a laugh. Seriously? "Well, STAR TEEN was also fun for me because it was my first major competition as a teenager," Alyssa confessed. "I also made so many new friends and got the best roommate in the world!"

These days, Alyssa is busy participating in the Model United Nations, which brought her to Qatar at the end of January. She is also in the Indonesia Children and Youth Choir and writing a book about global warming. For the future, she would like to continue her education to one of the best business college in America. Good luck to you, Alyssa!