

# FESTIVAL MARKS CITY'S DIVERSITY

by **Charlotte Percival**

[charlotte.percival@ycp.co.uk](mailto:charlotte.percival@ycp.co.uk)

ANOTHER celebration of York's multicultural heritage will be held in the city centre next year.

Residents and visitors were so impressed by Expressions!, the multicultural food, music, dance and arts festival, which took place last month, that the organisers are already planning next summer's event.

Sasiki Hubberstey, of YUMI (York Unifying and Multicultural Initiative), said people did not realise there was so much ethnic diversity in York.

She said: "The idea was to

represent the different ethnic communities that all live and work in York so they have a chance to become visible.

"It is often perceived that York is very much mono-cultured and until we see there are all these groups who live and work here and they contribute to our city, then we won't get a real picture of York as it is today.

"There are in fact 30 different ethnic groups in York.

"York is changing and this festival reflects the changes York is going through."

Cultures from the countries of Bolivia, Germany, Brazil, Mongolia, Malaysia, Korea, Mexico and Sri Lanka contributed to Expressions!

Participants cooked traditional food, sang, danced and

sold ethically-sourced or fair trade clothes, felts, slippers, hats, jewellery, rugs and bags from counties such as Bolivia, Mongolia and Thailand.

Indian activities included dressing and adorning a bride and a traditional board game.

Sasiki said there had been enormous enthusiasm among participants.

"It wasn't hard to organise and I found the cooks through word of mouth," she said.

"None of them were professional cooks, but they were all passionate about culture and food and we trained them up to health and safety standards.

"Many of them had sold out

of food by 2pm on Saturday and they had to go home and cook and bake all night so they would have enough to sell the next day.

"They were amazed people loved their food so much."

YUMI's long-term plans involve setting up a centre which represents the variety of cultures in York.

Sasiki said it would have both exhibition and work space.

"We want to create a dynamic hub of multicultural activity where people from all the ethnic groups in York can meet."

For information about YUMI or to help organise next year's festival, phone Sasiki on 01904 624742 or email [sh\\_yumi@hotmail.com](mailto:sh_yumi@hotmail.com)



**Coun Janet Greenwood, the Lord Mayor of York, tries on a hat at the Mongolian stall with Lhamna Cutting**