



Peaceful Atmosphere at Ekinci (Antakya-Turkey): Servas Peace School

Servas Turkey organises Peace School Programme in Ekinci (3aydiy) Antakya, Turkey between July 06-16th. A number of local and international Servas volunteers meet in this friendly village at this school for unusual experiences. They come together with kids aged 5-14 in the gardens, house yards and streets (Peace Campus) to teach whatever they know. The topics they teach are various but peace, languages, music, dances, nature, recycling, human rights, drama, toy making, drawing, traditional games, making short movies, photography, astronomy, etc. are the main interests. The volunteers staying with local family find the opportunity to experience the culture, family life, cuisine and habits whereas they can also introduce their own cultures. This experience gives children, families and

eventually all villagers a big change to open their visions and grow bigger dreams. Also Servas ideals come true within children.



The founder of the school Mehmet Ates says; *“I try to bring the richness of the world into my village through the volunteers and also want to introduce the genuine local culture of Antiochia and this region to the world culture. I dream to make children feel that they are world citizens. They are children of the earth”.*

Servas Peace School at Ekinci (Antakya-Turkey)



The school runs with no money but with the support of local people. There is specific curriculum or textbooks, no ordinary classes, no forcing for attendance and no official teachers. Everywhere can be a school room, anyone can be a teacher and any subjects can be taught at this school. For example the children of the school have become volunteers after 9 years and now they work as teachers. Also a local farmer can also give workshops. Moreover the volunteers come together every day, give feedback and schedule the next day workshops.

One of the volunteers Hazal Orhon shares her experience at the school; *"I leave big part of my heart at the village every year. I feel like I am going my own home because the local families are so welcoming and good people. The school experience is so precious. Children have learnt to make short movies from the very beginning till the end. I can say the future cinema makers are growing at this village. I teach children and they teach me. Finally, I come back from school with new ideas each time"*.

The village children attending this school every summer (60-70 children each year) grew up with the ideas of peace and understanding the 'others.' The children developed awareness in languages and different

cultures of the world. Parents have become more tolerant to the differences and more understanding to the dreams of their children.



Mehmet Ates has big dreams, too. He wants to build a big Servas Peace School Campus in the nature. The school would be open throughout the year for children of the world. Volunteer people who would like to share their backgrounds with children and locals would come to live at the campus for a while. It is possible to turn the world into a village of peace. I count on Servas community and people who have similar dreams.

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Mehmet Ates

Servas Peace School Coordinator, Turkey

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