

**Experience report: Yoga + Arts Yenisakran-Izmir  
19.-26.07.2012**

This camp is a special art project, not a real workcamp. The participants learn from volunteer teachers how to do yoga and how to make fine arts and rhythm. I met people from other countries like Finland, Italy, Korea and Japan. It was a good chance for me to learn more about different cultures.

The camp site, shortly called Afacan, is a youth center where Genctur runs different activities for kids and youngsters like voluntary workcamps, seminars, youth exchanges, trainings etc. It's a non-profit project from people from Berlin and Istanbul, founded in 2004. Intercultural exchanges can be grant-aided by "Umverteilen! Stiftung für eine, solidarische Welt" - AG Er-Fahren.

In Afacan, young people meet each other, exchange and learn things from each other in a different way. Afacan is about 80 km north of Izmir, in a bay directly at the Aegean Sea, some hundred meters from the coastal road, next to Yenisakran. There are holiday homes, a shop/café, olive groves and fields in the neighbourhood. Afacan has about 8,000 square metres and is like a small park where you can discover different plants and animals. The warm water is made by sun energy. There is enough space for games, sports, art, relaxing, learning, discussions, beach, sports places, a swimming pool, different rooms, an open-air cinema, a big café with plenum and fireplace, a library, painting workshop and a disco terrace. You can walk along the sea through the olive groves to an antique place, a hot spring, a quarry, a mountain and a village.

The income of the center (including the extra fee you pay for this camp) is spent to organize camps to host disadvantaged children and youth from all over Turkey in the same center. During the camp there was also a camp for disadvantaged kids. A campmate from Japan taught them origami in her free time. On the first day we met Filiz, the manager of Afacan. She and her staff were so helpful and friendly. The camp leader Neslihan was a bilingual ex-volunteer who coordinated the sessions really well. She also taught us the art of marbling which is a traditional Turkish art (Ebru) for printing multi-coloured swirled orstone-like patterns on paper. The patterns are formed by first floating the colours on the surface of a liquid and then laying the paper or fabric onto the colours to absorb them. Fatma is a great bead setting teacher. I liked to be in her class and to discover my creativity. We also did macramé. Thanks to Belgüzar everybody could relax with oil painting. We also had a lesson about skin care with her. Our yoga teacher Bilge had a lot to tell us about life and yoga. She has been trained in India and did a wonderful job. I'm totally relaxed now and my body feels better. I loved the lesson with Neslihan. She taught photography techniques, e.g. how to take good pictures with the camera. Idil did a professional drama/theatre session. We learned a lot and it was funny as well.

One evening we visited Candarli, a quiet fishing and holiday place at the sea with a market, nice restaurants, a good disco and an old castle. Together with 2 kids' camps we went to Pergammon antic site. It was so interesting to see. At the last night the kids organized a talent show with different dances, songs (Turkish/Kurdish) and instruments. During the day we made t-shirts by Batik Art with Neslihan.

I would love to do this camp again and recommend it to everybody. To meet the international camp mates, the local people, the Turkish kids and the volunteers from the other kids' camp was a great experience. Especially the lessons with Mihriban have been really good. She is a rhythm and dance teacher and taught us African Dance, belly dance and salsa.

I enjoyed the place Afacan very much, it's so lovely, every day you can swim and relax in one of the hammocks. The sunrises and sunsets and the shimmering of the moon are really special, everything is so peaceful and you get to know a lot of interesting people and cultures. Thank you so much.

*A. Abeck, Germany*