

Bookbinding Workshop

Final outcome

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ESC Volunteer 2025



The project "Open Your Eyes" is supported by the EU programme European Solidarity Corps.

About me



Hiking



Traveling



Protection of the
environment



Bookbinding



Drawing and
painting



Ceramics

My name is Sarah and I am an ESC volunteer at INEX in Slovakia for 11 months. During my project I had to create a workshop. I choose to do it about bookbinding with recycled materials.

Why this topic?



I love art in general



I learnt bookbinding
two years ago and fall
in love with it



I like to share with
people I know



I have strong
environmental
values

Bookbinding *workshop* with recycled materials

Aims

Raise awareness
about recycling
and environmental
protection.



Encourage
creativity,
imagination,
and the
development of
patience and
precision through
manual activities.



Objectives

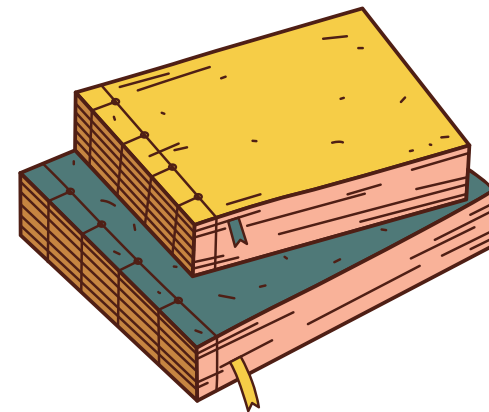
To learn:

how to reuse and
transform recycled
materials

instead of throwing
them away



how to create
handmade
notebook



how to use
creativity to
decorate the
notebook cover



Did I reach the objectives?

Reuse and
transform recycled
materials ✓



Create
handmade
notebook ✓



Use creativity ✓



Workshop in practice

1 Theoretical
part



2 Creating the
notebook



3 Conclusion and
going home with
their own
notebook



Workshop in practice

1 Theoretical part



The first part, the theoretical part, was an opportunity for me to talk about several topics.

To begin, I explained where bookbinding, or more precisely cartonera bookmaking, comes from. It started in South America in the 2000s, during a period of social and economic crisis. Many people were living in poverty, without access to education. Two men had the idea to collect discarded cardboard from the streets, use it to create handmade books, and sell them at a very low price or sometimes give them away to make literature and education accessible to everyone. This movement began in Argentina and later spread across South America.

After that, I spoke about the importance of recycling. In today's society, we consume more and more without always thinking about the consequences. By reusing materials, like the old cardboard I collected from a supermarket for this workshop, we can reduce waste and show that even things considered "trash" can have a second life.

Sources : [Cartoneras: A documentary on cardboard publishing in Latin America](#)
[Cartonera: Culture in a Time of Crisis](#) | [Collection in Focus](#) | [British Library](#)

Workshop in practice

2 Creating the notebook



The second part was the time for me to show the different steps to create the book. I taught different bookbinding techniques for adults and a simplified version for kids, but overall, here are the main steps:

1. Cover the cardboard with nice fabric
2. Make holes in the paper for the inside and in the cover
3. Sew the cover together
4. Sew the inside pages into the cover

The adult workshops took around four hours, and the kids' one about 45 minutes because of class time limits. Everyone was focused and really involved. I was showing each step to everyone, they were making it, asking questions, and I was helping them. When everyone finished one step, I showed the next one.

Of course, some people wanted to go faster and tried to do something that wasn't quite right, while others were slower, so I sometimes had to continue without them and then come back to help them more individually. It taught me (and them) patience.

Workshop in practice



Conclusion and going home with their own notebook



At the end, I was always really amazed to see how happy everyone was with their creations. I enjoyed telling them that now that they know how to make a notebook, they can make as many as they want, and they can also share this new skill with others.

This way, they can continue being creative while staying environmentally friendly. I received many greetings and thanks from both adults and children, and it felt wonderful to see that I could contribute to that experience.

First trial with INEX office

April

6 participants



Tea Meeting

May

16 participants



Slartinka Workcamp

June

6 participants



Kysak Workcamp

August

11 participants



Workshop#2 at INEX

October

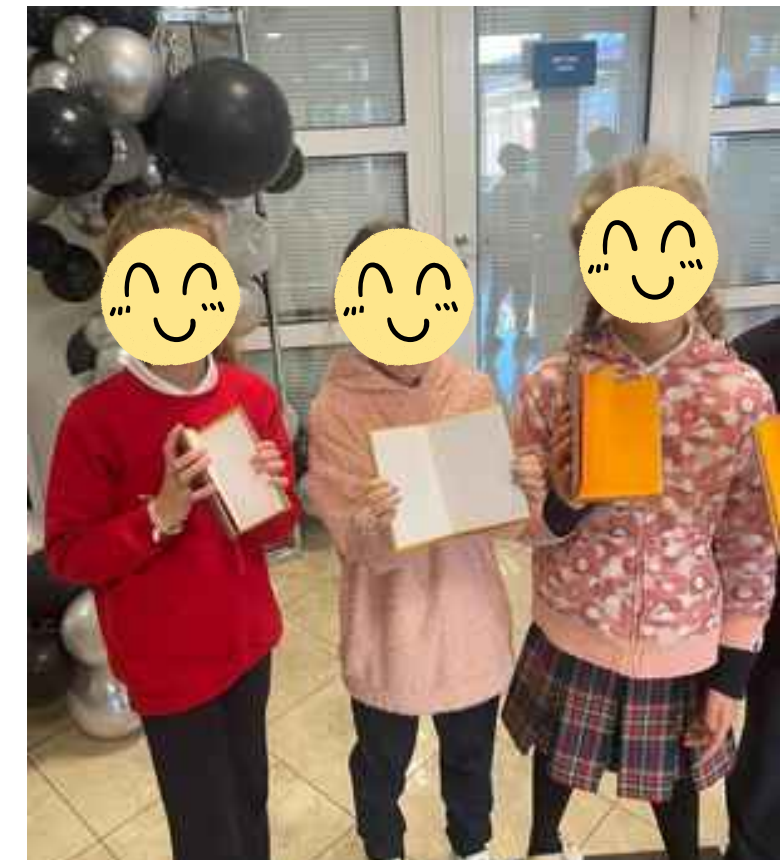
6 participants



International School

October

39 participants



School ZŠ Vazovova

December

46 participants



School SZŠ Bojkatovská

December

21 participants

In total:

151

participants

Before the workshop

Preparing the workshop took a lot of work before the big day. I had to find and prepare all the materials: cardboard, nice paper, glue, scissors, cutter, ruler, thread in different colors, straight and curved needles, paper for the inside of the books, dotcom...

I also had to precut all the cardboard needed, because if I had participants cutting it themselves, the workshop would have lasted forever, and that wasn't the plan! So I cut, cut, and cut again, but it was worth it. I also did some promotion for the workshops held at INEX. Here are the links to the materials on the Instagram account!

First workshop at INEX - Tea Meeting in May

Second workshop at INEX - October



Participants point of view

Interested ?



Yes! On these pictures we can see them asking for help like in school, it was really funny moment.

Involved ?



Keep going all evening... The workshop is quite long but no one never left and everyone always wanted to finish the notebook by themselves.

Their evaluation ?



I had really good feedback from participants. Also the one from the workcamps gave me really good written evaluation. And they even started to use the notebook right after finishing it!

My evaluation

What did I like?



Sharing



Helping



Make people
happy

Would I change anything? No!

I really loved giving this workshop and I'm so glad I had this opportunity. I will definitely continue doing it in the future.

After the two workshops held at INEX, I also created Instagram reels to share the experience.

Here are the links:

[First workshop at INEX - Tea Meeting in May](#)

[Second workshop at INEX - October](#)

Best moments



Thank you!