

B.O.B.B.I.N:



History of a little wooden stick that by twisting and crossing built
a European **L.A.C.E.E** network
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Preface

Once upon a time there was a lady who, sitting in her home, while working bobbin lace was thinking:
"I will jealously guard the bobbin lace teachings I have received and share them only with those dear to me".

but...

she couldn't imagine that around the corner there was another lady who was thinking the same thing....

luckily, other ladies were thinking.....

"How nice it would be to expand my knowledge of the art of lace-making" and especiallyeliminating the ancient attitude of lacemakers to "keeping the secret" of their art.

Indeed, in the mind of this little group of persons there were other ideas as:

- Respond to the educational challenge of an ageing population in Europe.
- Provide help to adults with pathways to improving their knowledge and competences.
- Enhance and widen their cultural heritage on other European countries backgrounds

Certainly, none of these persons could imagine that these ideas would become real only by disseminating their passion for bobbin lacemaking.

but what is bobbin lace?

Simply a pricked-out pattern pinned on a solid pillow where little wooden sticks go around twisting and crossing threads to realise artistic manufactures.

and not only: Bobbin lace is a craft that over the centuries has had a strong impact on the economy of European countries giving to women the opportunity to support their families but also the possibility to develop skills. Undeniably, lacemaking tradition has survived for centuries only being handed down from teacher to learner or, more likely, from mother to daughter, jealously guarding the secrets of the art.

Nevertheless, this might have been fine in the past, today in the age of innovation it has been put in evidence that contemporary bobbin lace can give rebirth to an ancient art as a little group of persons has worked hard to put in evidence the:

- need to establish a group of lace makers/teachers with a technical and cultural background that could make them expert not only in their technique but even in that of other countries
- requirement to connect the lace makers making them able to understand that different cultural heritage opens the mind to wider horizons both culturally and professionally
- need to achieve a real cooperation and interaction between Association/Organisation working in the field of lace

but what has all this theory led to?

Simply to:

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Erasmus + Project: "Building better Opportunities with boBBins to Innovate the Network of Lace Associations Creating Education and Employment

giving start to the **history of a little wooden stick that twisting, and crossing built an European L.A.C.E.E network** of Organisations dealing with bobbin lace.





Once upon a time two ladies one German and one Italian were having a phone call as they know each other from long time, when the German said, *“Why don’t we try to promote a European cooperation between Organisations providing adult education in the field of bobbin lace?”* The other answered *“Why not?”* They were aware that the road would not be easy to move, but their tenacity would be their strength.

So, they started the construction of an ERASMUS + project, first step was the partnership. All over Europe thousand are the Organisations dealing with bobbin lace, but it was necessary to find a solid and friendly group.

At the end the partnership was ready:

- Forum Alte Spitze – Germania (Coordinator)
- Encajeras Vuelta y Cruz (Spain)
- Ceska Palicka (Czech Rep.)
- Couleurs Dentelle (France)
- Verein Klöppeln und textile Spitzenkunst in Österreich (Austria)
- Comune di Scanno (Italy)

The partners discussed and decided on:

- the context and the objectives of the project as well as the needs and target groups to be addressed.
- the results they expected to achieve during the project and on its completion
- the most relevant horizontal or sectoral priority according to the objectives of the project
- how the tasks and responsibilities would be distributed among the partners
- how to give to the project innovative and/or complementary goals
- who and how select and involve participants in the different activities
- plan transnational training activities for target group, teachers, and staff
- prepare a dissemination plan so to involve local authorities, stakeholders, and citizens

After long and animated work, they submitted the project, and all together started waiting results of the call.

It was summer 2018 when the Italian lady received a phone call from Marianne Stang, the German lady. She said something about a project, but the receiving person did not realise the true meaning and had to ask her to repeat and finally the words were understood!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

German NA had approved **B.O.BB.I.N. L.A.C.E.E.** under the Programme ERASMUS + Key Action: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Action: Strategic Partnerships impacting on the field adult education. Unbelievable the hard work had been recognised, partnership was informed, and the adventure began.

The starting date was fixed on September 1st, 2018, the deadline August 2021, three years that seems a lot but at the end few to achieve ambitious objectives as:

- increase the importance and the historical value of bobbin lace, improve the skills and competences of innovative non-formal learning methods
- capture the attention of consumers, creating new employment opportunities able to preserve tradition with innovative approaches
- build a stable European transnational cooperation network linking cultural associations, museums, local/regional authorities, and other institutions active in lace

With big enthusiasm and little fear, the partnership started acting and went on working hard to:

- Organise activities, implement training activities, identify Target group, teachers, and staff members
- Plan meeting and mobilities
- New partners to meet and help to manage Erasmus projects
- Other Organisations and local authorities to be involved
- Local events to be organised





but WHERE DID THEY WANT TO ARRIVE?

With **B.O.BB.I.N. L.A.C.E.E.** they want to give to the lace makers the chance to discover new horizons in the field of “bobbin lace” while maintaining live its traditional aspect because the project aims to create a network of lace associations to enhance education opportunities, based on the quality of non-formal learning, implementing links to the labour market, but above all, strengthening the capacity of self-esteem of the participants.

Kick-off meeting was the occasion for partners to review action plan of the activities both on administrative and financial management and fix level of non-formal learning to be achieved.

1st Transnational mobility in February 2019 organised by Verein Klöppeln und textile Spitzenkunst in Österreich in Wien Austria gave the start to blended mobilities, short-term joint staff training events and transnational meetings.

2nd Transnational mobility in July 2019 organised by Comune di Scanno Italy was the occasion to meet once again and continue updating on local bobbin lace techniques.

Everything is running on schedule; partners have overcome their fears and the enthusiasm was high. Teachers are keeping classroom; learners are becoming familiar with the little wooden stick or more likely “*the bobbin*” that twisting and crossing threads was realising amusing laces in the different countries.

butnobody could imagine what was going to happen!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It was February 2020 when worldwide pandemic began immediately after their 3rd transnational mobility that partner Ceska Palicka (Czech Rep.) had organised in Prague in January 2020:

- everyone was frozen in their houses
- activities stopped
- training stopped
- meeting stopped
- life stopped

All members of partnership tried to do their best to be in contact and not let work stop!!!

but still nobody could imagine what was going to happen!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It was September 2020 when things seemed to be going better, they restarted working to respect schedules, Spanish partner started organising virtual transnational mobility and all partners were collaborating.

When suddenly Elda Gantner called the Italian lady telling something about Marianne Stang but once again, she didn't realise the true meaning, and had to ask her to repeat and finally she understood!!

It was a shock for her. The person who pushed her for more than 20 years to work in projects was no longer with us. She will never forget Marianne, that was her inspiration and sometimes support even for personal problems.

Anneliese Wienands, President of the Association FAS and sister of Marianne Stang was great in this situation: she has not lost her courage and has decided to carry on the project with the help of Elda Gantner, our good friend since 2001.

Together all partners once again restarted working

- Change of contact person
- Preparing next meeting
- Virtual training
- Evaluate what to do till the end of the project

Everyone with mind to Marianne took up to go on and finish the activities in her honour. Teachers and learners continued training and now the little wooden stick was twisting and crossing threads on a virtual way

but again, nobody could imagine what was going to happen!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2021 started and working to respect schedules, French partner organized 5th transnational virtual mobility when we discovered that some members of the partnership (more than one unfortunately) had serious health problems, but they did not give up and continued working without crying over spilled milk. Thanks to these courageous friends for their silent and precious work.





And.... Once again, we were informed that Lothar Stang was passed, we could not believe it. Marianne's companion of a lifetime was no longer with us but with her forever.

Another time, we have taken up our heads and went on to respect the willingness of our unforgettable friend Marianne. Thanks, Marianne, for what you did for us and for the worldwide bobbin lace entourage.

but Now it's time only to draw up sums of the three years project's lifetime and say

Even though the COVID-19 has initially negatively affected the activities, which were ongoing or were planned, after the first moment of bewilderment and fear, who first who after all, the partners restarted the activities giving life to virtual training, that in our project had been indicated as one of the innovative methods in a notoriously traditional field. The virtual learning was already implemented as training method for daily support to learners, but from March 2020 it has been applied as normal training method. Partnership's main objective was the safety and protection of all participants, while fully comply with all the containment measures taken at different national level.

To face difficulties, the coordinator of the project, FAS, has been contacted by the German National Agency of the Erasmus + Programme receiving guidance, information, and support, providing maximum flexibility to adapt our activities to the current situation. National Agency has put in force an "Addendum to Grant Agreement" recognising additional financial and contractual provisions for projects performing by COVID – 19 conditioned virtual activities.

The 4th transnational mobility of the project was scheduled for June 2020, but due to the emergencies linked to COVID-19, the partnership, also in relation to the programme and the indications given by the European Commission, has decided first to postpone the mobility to November 2020 then considering the continuation of the pandemic at European level has decided to organize the workshops in a virtual way.

The 5th transnational mobility of the project was scheduled and held on January 2021, but still in virtual way.

It is the worth to underline that bobbin lace is a craft activity that needs to be supported by practical demonstration on how to execute the different stitches, as each territory has varied way of working the same stitch. The classroom training method in the case of bobbin lace first focuses on equal training for all the learners but later involves them individually to overcome problems. We know by experience that learners prefer direct training from the teacher that makes a healthy learning environment.

Despite the awareness that classroom lessons were the ideal training method, our partners VyC (Spain) and C&D (France) organised virtual classroom learning to avoid that there would be a gap in the mobility activities. MEET Platform was the working space where our workshops were presented, and participants could catch up face to face.

Spanish and French team have prepared materials for virtual teaching that have been sent to all partners before the beginning of the meetings. The material composed by a Handbook with history of bobbin lace, description of laces, diagrams, and colour code of each piece of lace that would be realised were indeed an optimum support for participants.

Faithfully the little wooden stick so called "**bobbin**" continued twisting and crossing the threads to realise magnificent "**LACEE**" but also reinforce the network of organisation of the project, that despite all adverse situations have faced them with great spirit of collaboration supporting each other, helping those in difficulties to overcome gaps and problems.

From the beginning all participants were looking forward to final event to be held in Germany in June 2021, where the coordinator had the task to organise the last transnational mobility with the exhibition of works realised by learners and teachers of the project and where the **little wooden stick** would demonstrate how





updated ability on twisting and crossing threads in a professional way led participants to link old techniques with innovative ICT tools, giving to the lace makers the opportunity to improve their creativity, competitiveness, employability and grow their entrepreneurial spirit.

Nevertheless, persistent COVID 19 pandemics has led the partnership, albeit reluctantly, to organize the sixth and final event of the **BOBBIN LACEE** project in a virtual manner, as for the 4th and 5th mobility meetings. The difficulties of virtual meetings highlighted in previous meetings allowed the organizing association FAS to improve the technical elements available and so give participants better working tools. Bobbin lace, being a craft made manually, needs practical demonstrations and detailed explanations on how to make the products, for this reason virtual lessons require qualified preparation of the training material.

This time due to higher number of participants it was necessary to identify a steadier meeting platform, the choice felt on ZOOM. FAS coordinator of the project has prepared materials for virtual teaching composed by a Handbook with history of bobbin lace, description of laces worked in the workshops, diagrams, and colour code of each piece of lace to be realised. All piece of works were accompanied by videos on YOUTUBE showing how to realise the lace. Participants were fully supported by German teachers the workshops were held, as usual for all countries, on five days.

At this point of the project, we must say that “**BOBBIN**” twisting and crossing threads has built a solid “**LACEE**” chain between participants. The English proverb “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link” used a lot when referring to teamwork has been completely disregarded as all team members have been strong and supported each other. The 'weak' member has influenced the success of the whole team in a positive way pushing them to help each other to overcome gaps or problems.

but now.....we must look each other in our eyes and remembering charming and nasty events of the 3 years spent together, give each other a virtual hug wishing that life can always smile after great fatal events. It's time to put the positive and negative things on the scale plate and see the plate of positivity come down proving that our little wooden stick for “**BOBBIN LACEE**” twisting and crossing threads has **demonstrated that:**

- Learners and staff have enriched their know-how exchanging experiences with people of different cultural background, eliminating the usual and ancient attitude of lace makers to “keep the secret” of their art connected with historical economic and political reasons.
- Learners have participated actively in the development, evaluation and dissemination of all the activities.
- Each partner has combined elements of the other's know how in the organization of its work and in the lace techniques.
- The partners have created the basis for a long-term co-operation enlarging the participation to similar organization in their area, implement in the training methods a common language called colour code, that gives to the lace makers the opportunity to reproduce laces even not coming from their country and so be able to knock down linguistic diversity.
- All partners have realised written and online material for teachers and learners to be used for training and have developed innovative ICT based contents, services and practises for lifelong learning
- The local communities have directly taken advantage of the development of the work of each partner, and now is aware of the results of the research by means of seminars, conferences and exhibition.

but what is the significance of this story?

Simply that with a little wooden stick “**bobbin**” partnership of “**B.O.BB.I.N. L.A.C.E.E.**” project has worked “**Building better Opportunities with boBBins to Innovate the Network of Lace Associations Creating Education and Employment**” disseminating a new innovative and technical vision of an ancient craft as “**bobbin lace**”.





Thanks to the commitment of all participants that despite difficulties linked to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions have never given up and made possible that the activities were all realised, and results achieved.

Special mention to our friend Marianne for giving us the possibility to live this wonderful history of a little wooden stick symbol of bobbin lace able to create innovation in traditional handcraft sector and that twisting, and crossing has built a European L.A.C.E.E network.





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