

## **D5.6 Report on Activities**

### **Training Schools**

#### **a-STEP COST Action CA19104**

#### **Working Group 5: Dissemination & Education**

WG1 in collaboration with WG5 organized two training schools for a-STEP members and non members. **The 1<sup>st</sup> Training School** “Building Bridges with Participatory Research” took place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 2023 at the University of Elbasan, Aleksandër Xhuvani in Albania. It focused on design-based research methodology and on work with individuals with special needs, specifically with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Intellectual Disability (ID). The topic of the training school was decided based on the suggestions of a-STEP members, based on the trends and the need for specific methodologies in the field of ASD and ID. The scientific committee evaluated the candidates for trainers and trainees. Four trainers and 15 trainees from 6 European countries: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, Portugal, and Turkiye were selected. The trainees were young researchers, PhD Candidates, postdocs and stakeholders. Each trainee was asked to bring to the Training School a poster related to the research performed by the participant or a proposal for developing a future research project in the field of assistive technology especially for individuals with ASD and ID. A short survey was shared with the trainers and the trainees after the Training School to get feedback in order to improve our work.

**The 2nd Training School** titled “White Paper Writing Training School” was organized during the 8th and the 9th of February 2024, at Karadeniz Technical University, in Trabzon, Turkiye. The aim of this Training School was to equip members of WG1 and WG5 with the essential skills required to prepare the most important deliverable of GP4 — the white paper. Given that none of the members had prior experience in writing a white paper, this training school was a crucial learning opportunity. During the two days of the Training School, the trainer Dr. László Lovaszy from the National University of Public Service, Hungary and the a-STEP members who participated in this training school, collaborated to create a comprehensive framework for the white paper and to develop a plan outlining the steps to complete the white paper.