



Gymnastic Development Manager Oceania and South East Asia, Ms Brooke Kneebush doing stretch exercises with Punaoleola Muaitau president of the Samoa Gymnastics Federation.

## A Mix Of Gymnastics Training Leadership Learning Under At NUS

By Kerstin Ofisa

Gymnastics training started at the National University of Samoa Gym for the first time this week.

Included as part of being trained in gymnastics is learning the values of leadership.

"Gymnastics is a very new sport and just educating others about what it is, is the starting point for that," said Development Manager Oceania and South East Asia, Ms Brooke Kneebush.

She believes gymnastics is a sport that Samoans will embrace in the future.

For the women in particular, the discipline and the training helps with the many challenges they face in leadership opportunities.

"Sometimes women may not feel confident to pursue those opportunities and that is the hope of this training, and that is to help them develop that confidence," she said.

"They actually do have the skills but might not recognize them and might not have the confidence to do so."

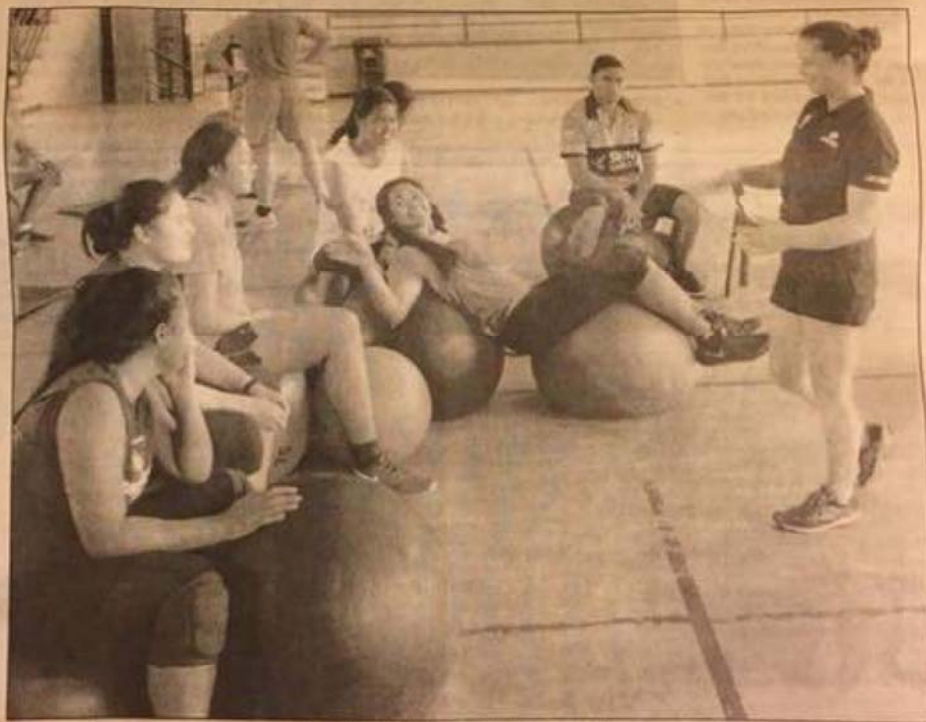
Kneebush also stressed the importance of the sport in encouraging more people to be physically active and tackle non-communicable disease issues.

"It's actually great for people of all fitness level and all abilities so that people with disabilities can actually participate as well," she said.

"We can teach the few skills and concepts quite simply at the basic level and it can be taken to the villages, the islands, schools and to the universities."

Local participants also agreed on some of the benefits they have learned from the event.

"I think the most important



Training group of girls and boys at the NUS Gym

thing I've learned so far is the importance of healthy living for our people" said Punaoleola Tiupita Muaitau president of the Samoa Gymnastics Federation.

"Leadership starts from our home. If you are a good leader, everyone will want to contribute because no one will want to follow you if they see that you lack confidence in yourself," she said.

"I have learned so much about the different techniques of the sport and how I can apply it to

everyday life exercising."

"It's cheap but it is also not easy because most of us Samoans are not physically fit"

Ailini Pao a teacher participant also shared her experience about the training.

"There are many new skills from this sport that is relevant in schools," she said.

"I am very happy because then I will apply these skills to my students especially in sports."

According to Ailini aerobic gymnastics has given her

confidence in mentoring and teaching sports to her students.

"Now I am confident about myself in the entire different warm ups and skills I encourage my students to take," she said.

"I hope that all the participants today will do the same."

According to some participants, the aerobic gymnastics was a bit harder than they thought.

It's been really fun but it's going to take some time to adjust to the new sport," said Lillyolevani Lesa.

"Since it's a new sport, you need to be flexible to do aerobics but it takes time especially when you are a first timer."

Students, teachers, student teachers and sports people who play in various sporting teams attend the training programme.

On Wednesday, a presenter training will be held so that participants can go back to their communities, sports club, and schools and share their knowledge.