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TeamGym4Health manual

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1. DEFINITION & FRAMEWORK

TeamGym4Health (TG4H) project is 30-month collaborative partnership project co-funded by the Erasmus+ program. It brings together 7 organizations from 6 countries to promote healthy lifestyles among children and youth through the practice of gymnastics discipline TeamGym. TeamGym is dynamic team-based sports discipline derived from the “Gymnastics for All” concept.

1.1 Introduction to the TeamGym discipline as a “Sport for All”

TeamGym is a team-based gymnastics discipline that emphasizes group synchronization, teamwork, and high-energy performance. It is widely recognized as a “*Sport for All*” because it accommodates participants of all ages, genders, and skill levels—from recreational beginners to elite international competitors. TeamGym is a team competition belonging to the European Gymnastics. Being a non-Olympic discipline, TeamGym comprises performances on three apparatus: Floor, Tumble and Trampet. Routines on each apparatus require effective teamwork and excellent technique with difficult skills in acrobatic and gymnastics elements. TeamGym is one of the youngest European Gymnastics discipline. The first European Championships in this discipline was held in Finland in 1996. and called „EuroTeam“. The first official TeamGym European Championships took place in Sweden in 2010. Until 2002. TeamGym was called EuroTeam. Having emerged in the Nordic countries in the 70s of the 20th century, TeamGym has now stepped onto the path of development on other continents as well. TeamGym, developed by the European Gymnastics, is only gymnastics discipline that is not included into the activity of the International Gymnastics Federation. Unlike traditional individual artistic gymnastics, TeamGym involves teams of 6 to 12 gymnasts who perform together across three distinct apparatus:

Floor Program: A choreographed routine performed in unison to music. It emphasizes synchronization, flexibility, and expressive movement.

Tumbling: Teams perform three fast-paced rounds of acrobatic series on a long tumbling track with “streaming” (gymnasts following each other in rapid succession).

Trampette: Teams perform somersaults and twists from a mini-trampoline (trampette), often including a vaulting element.

TeamGym is uniquely inclusive due to several key factors:

Diverse Categories: Competitions are divided into Men, Women, and Mixed teams (50% male, 50% female), making it one of the few gymnastics disciplines with a strong mixed-gender focus.

Lifelong Participation: It is suitable for all ages, with categories ranging from primary/youth to junior and senior elite levels.

Inclusive for All Abilities: Programs like those in TeamGym Competition for Athletes with Disabilities or other Special Needs offer specific levels for athletes with disabilities or special needs (ADSN), allowing them to compete in integrated or dedicated squads.

Team Spirit & Retention: Because of its social nature and emphasis on collective success rather than individual pressure, it is highly effective at retaining members who might otherwise drop out of solo competitive sports.

Origins: The sport emerged in Scandinavia in the 1970s and remains most popular in Northern Europe.

Current Status: It is governed internationally by TeamGym European Gymnastics. While it is not currently an Olympic discipline, it is recognized by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) and is gaining global popularity for its entertainment value and inclusivity.

1.2 Explanation of the Team Gym for Health Educational Methodology aimed at improving motor literacy and physical fitness

The *TeamGym4Health (TG4H) Educational Methodology* is a collaborative framework designed to improve the health and physical fitness of children and youth by transforming TeamGym into a structured "Gymnastics for All" discipline.

Unlike traditional high-performance gymnastics, this methodology prioritizes motor literacy—the foundational ability to move with competence and confidence—over elite-level acrobatics.

1.3 Core Pillars of the Methodology

- **Systematic Motor Development:** The curriculum is designed to help gymnasts develop fundamental movement skills through three specific apparatus: Floor, Tumble, and Trampoline. It uses a "taxonomic development" approach, where skills are broken down into step-by-step progressions (e.g., learning a somersault from a raised platform before attempting it from a run).
- **"Strength Topography" for Health:** The methodology focuses on strengthening specific muscle groups that support a growing body. Priority is given to the abdominal wall, spinal column, and large trunk muscles to create a stable core before adding heavy or complex loads.
- **The 3-Year Rule:** To protect long-term physical fitness, the methodology enforces a rule where athletes must complete **three years of general preparation** before performing high-intensity, specific strength exercises.
- **Psychological and Social Literacy:** By training in teams of 6 to 10, children develop social skills like **friendship, trust, and caring for teammates**. This social support system is key to decreasing sport dropout rates among youth.

1.3.1 Implementation Strategies

The *TeamGym4Health Methodology* uses a simplified **Table of Difficulty** for Level A (Beginners) and Level B (Intermediate) to ensure athletes develop motor skills at a safe and appropriate pace.

- **Targeted Programs:** The methodology offers simplified versions for different age groups: **Program A** (non-gymnasts, 12–15 years old) and **Program B** (gymnasts, 15–18 years old).
- **Coach Education:** A comprehensive **240-hour training syllabus** ensures coaches understand not just the "how" of a move, but the neurological and biomechanical "why" behind motor learning.
- **Inclusive Design:** The methodology is explicitly adapted for participants of **all levels and abilities**, including those with disabilities, ensuring that health benefits are accessible to everyone.

1.3.2 Level A (Beginner: 12–15 Years Old)

For beginners, the focus is on mastering basic rotations and body control. In Table 1. it is evident Level A program for Beginners – gymnasts from 12-15 years old with elements and difficulty values. Selected educational videos from the MOOC platform with QR codes for Level A are apparent in the sidebars. TeamGym for Health project have general link to the MOOC platform, where all resources can be accessed: <https://www.smart-nest.eu/teamgym>

Table 1. Level A (Beginners) program

Apparatus	Forward Elements (Diff Value)	Backward Elements (Diff Value)
Tumbling	Tucked/Piked Roll (0.1), Handstand to Roll (0.1), Cartwheel (0.2), Round off (0.3), Handspring (0.4), Flyspring (0.4), Tucked Salto (0.5), Piked Salto (0.6), Straight Salto (0.7).	Tucked/Piked Roll (0.1), Roll to Handstand (0.1), Cartwheel (0.1), Round off (0.2), Flick Flack (0.3), Tucked Salto (0.4), Piked Salto (0.5), Straight Salto (0.6).
Trampoline	With Vault: Roll (0.1), Cartwheel (0.2), Round off (0.3), Handspring with head support (0.3), Handspring (0.4).	Without Vault: Straight Jump (0.1), Straddle Jump (0.1), Pike Jump (0.1), Tucked Salto (0.2), Piked Salto (0.3), Straight Salto (0.4).
Floor	Balance Elements (Diff Value)	Composition Requirements (C-score)
	Mandatry Categories: Handstands, Pirouettes; Rhythmic jumps (Cat leaps, Tucked Jumps), and Static Balance (held for 5 seconds) Deductions: each missing category -0.5 points for Balance, Jump, Acro, Group, Flexibility	Formations: 4 specific types (Small, Curve, Cross and Large) Group Elements: at least 1 group element (e.g. a lift) Acrobatic Elements: at least 2 different elements

1.3.3 Level B (Intermediate: 15–18 Years Old)

Level B introduces twisting elements and more complex combinations while maintaining a focus on style and technical precision over raw difficulty. In Table 2. it is evident Level B program for Intermediate – gymnasts from 15-18 years old with key elements and difficulty values. Selected educational videos from the MOOC platform with QR codes for Level B are apparent in the sidebars. TeamGym for Health project have general link to the MOOC platform, where all resources can be accessed: <https://www.smart-nest.eu/teamgym>

Table 2. Level B (Intermediate) program

Apparatus	Key Elements (Diff Value)	Twisting/Complex Skills (Diff Value)
Tumbling	Round off (0.3), Handspring (0.4), Tucked Salto (0.5), Straight Salto (0.7)	Tucked Salto with ½ twist (0.6), Piked Salto with ½ twist (0.7), Straight Salto with ½ twist (0.8), Tucked Salto with 1/1 twist (0.9), Straight Salto with 1/1 twist (1.0)
Trampoline	With Vault: Handspring (0.4), Handspring with ½ twist on/off (0.5-0.6), Handspring with 1/1 twist of (0.7)	Without Vault: Tucked Salto with ½ twist (0.5), Straight Salto with 1/1 twist (0.8), Tucked salto with 1 ½ twist (0.9), Straight Salto with 1 ½ twist (1.0)
Floor	Focus: Increased technical precision and style over raw difficulty. Introduces more complex pirouettes and combined jumping series.	D-score: Based on a simplified “Table of Difficulty” for intermediate gymnasts
	Composition requirements (C-score)	Artistic Expression: Higher emphasis on synchronization and movement linked to the music Formations: Must maintain 4 distinct formations with smoother transitions between them

1.3.3 Core Principles for Both Levels

There are several principles that must be followed:

- **Style Over Difficulty:** The choice of elements must never sacrifice style and technical precision. Selected skills must always fit the knowledge and maturity of the gymnasts.
- **The Team Round:** In the first round of Tumbling and Trampoline, **all gymnasts** must perform the same element to demonstrate team synchronization.
- **Judging:** For teams with more than six gymnasts, the difficulty score is based on the elements performed by the **last six gymnasts** in the streaming order.

1.4 Reducing Sports Dropout And Fostering A "Fun, Stimulating, and Challenging" Environment

The *TeamGym4Health (TG4H) Methodology* addresses high sports dropout rates among youth by shifting from a high-pressure individual model to a **socially supportive team environment**. The following strategies are used to keep training "fun, stimulating, and challenging":

1.4.1 The Power of the Team (Social Retention)

Unlike individual artistic gymnastics, TeamGym is built on collective success, which reduces personal performance anxiety.

- **Common Goals:** The discipline strongly develops friendship and "caring for other teammates".
- **Mutual Assistance:** Gymnasts are trained to help each other with stretching and basic skills. This "trainer to trainer" and "gymnast to gymnast" approach ensures a spirit of satisfaction and trust.
- **Team Spirit:** Competitions are recognized for their "very good spirit and an exciting atmosphere," which makes the sport attractive to stay in.

1.4.2 High-Energy "Streaming"

The "stimulating and challenging" nature of the sport comes from its unique performance format:

- **Continuous Action:** In Tumbling and Trampoline, gymnasts perform in rapid "streaming" (one after another). At least two gymnasts must be moving at all times, creating a high-speed, dynamic program.
- **Entertainment Value:** The routines are performed to music and are designed to be "spectacular," "attractive," and "exciting to watch," which keeps athletes engaged and motivated.

1.4.3 Differentiated Challenge Levels

To prevent frustration (a major cause of dropout), the program offers achievable challenges:

- **Program A vs. Program B:** By offering a beginner-specific program for non-gymnasts (12–15 years old), the methodology ensures that new participants aren't overwhelmed by elite requirements.
- **Progressive Skills:** Athletes move through a "taxonomic development," such as learning somersaults from a raised platform before a full run, allowing for constant "small wins".

1.4.4 Psychological & Safety Mentorship

This approach creates a solid foundation for TeamGym program. By prioritizing emotional safety along with physical safety, you are addressing better performance and lower burnout for gymnasts. This usually leads to:

- **Positive Environment:** Coaches are trained to provide mentorship and positive feedback specifically to help athletes build confidence.
- **Safeguarding:** By focusing on safety and the prevention of violence or abuse, the gym becomes a "safe space," which is critical for long-term athlete retention.

1.4.5 The Ideal Age for Transition

The Educational Methodology identifies two primary entry levels for non-gymnasts and developing athletes - Program A (Ages 12-15), Beginner Level, and Program B (Ages 15-18), Intermediate Level. TeamGym is more fun and energetic than gymnastics, focusing on friendship and team spirit. To address the "Ideal" time to change sports discipline, we need:

- **Active Recruitment:** The program have to be more interesting for new participants in developing friendship. Transitioning an athlete while they are still active but showing signs of burnout (frustration with individual pressure) is the most effective way to prevent 1-year gap;
- **The "Social" Factor:** TeamGym allows for "mutual assistance between gymnastics and coaches" wich builds trust. This shift in the power dynamic can be the "hook" for an athlete who is tired of the rigid, top-down structure of classic gymnastics. The document lists several high-level academic and sports partners (e.g. Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Serbia and Sportno Drustvo Gib, Slovenia), who are in a prime position to implement the suggested "collaboration" to integration of TG4H experience into the TeamGym Coach Training program in Faculty of Sport and Physical Education (Serbia);
- *** The Syllabus Link:** The curriculum is designed to be a part of an accredited system (Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University of Niš). This allows for a formal "bridge" where coaches from artistic/classic clubs can refer athletes to TeamGym programs rather than letting them leave the sport entirely.

1.4.6 Athlete Transition & Retention Protocol (ATRP)

To better address the "dropout" mission, the following strategies could be integrated and link into the coaches responsibilities.

Table 3. Core Strategies for Retention

<i>Transition Strategy</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
The 3-Month Window	Proactive outreach to athletes who have missed 4+ weeks of classic training
Simultaneous Training	Allowing athletes to practice Floor in classic and Tumble/Trampoline in TeamGym for a trial period
Peer Mentorship	Using current TeamGym athletes (former classic gymnasts) to demonstrate the “fun” aspect to struggling individuals

The most effective way to prevent sport dropout is to facilitate the move to TeamGym before the athlete officially quits classic gymnastics.

- **The 3-Month Critical Window:** Data suggests that once an athlete has been inactive for more three months, the likelihood of returning to any gymnastics discipline drops over 60%;
- **Early Intervention:** Coaches should identify “at-risk” athletes (those showing signs of burnout, plateaued progress or high stress) and offer a **4-week “TeamGym Discovery” period** while they are still registered in their classic programs;
- **Strategic Collaboration with Classic Clubs:** To ensure a steady pipeline and professional handling of athletes, “Grassroots” TeamGym programs should establish formal agreements with Artistic/Classic Gymnastics clubs;
- **Referral System:** Instead of losing “dropped out” gymnasts/ athlete from club's registry, the club refers them to the TeamGym section. This keeps the athlete/gymnast within the club's ecosystem but in a more social, team-oriented environment;
- **Skill Mapping:** Coaches should emphasize that the technical foundation of classic gymnastics (Floor and Vault) makes the transition to TeamGym instantaneously rewarding. An athlete/gymnast who feels like a “failure” in elite artistic gymnastics become a “specialist” and “leader” in a TeamGym squad;
- **Age-Specific Transition Windows - The “Pre-Dropout” Phase (Ages 12-14):** Ideal for moving athlete/gymnast who find the individual pressure of competitions overwhelming. Focus on the Tumbling and Trampoline streaming, which offers immediate “high-speed” fun;
- **The “Longevity” Phase (Ages 15-18):** Focus on the **Social** and **Choreographic** aspects. At this age, the “Team” become the primary motivation for staying in the sport.

The goal of this TG4H project is not to “steal” athlete/gymnast from other disciplines, but to provide a safety net. An athlete/gymnast who moves to TeamGym program is an athlete/gymnasts who stays healthy, active and connected to the sport community.

2. Core Content & Educational Resources

2.1 Safe Training Techniques Specifically for Grassroots Gymnastics

To ensure safety as a "sport for all," the **TeamGym4Health** methodology emphasizes a systematic approach to coaching, focusing on injury prevention and psychological well-being at the grassroots level.

2.1.1 The IDEA Method for Skill Acquisition

Kerr and al., 2015. have come to a conclusion that for gymnasts is far safer to learn new skills at an older age. American Sport Education Program with USA Gymnastics, 2011. considered that teaching gymnastics skills requires to focus on principles of teaching, and they recommend learning skills within acronym IDEA. Coaches are encouraged to use the **IDEA** acronym to introduce new movements safely to beginners:

- **I - Introduce:** Clearly state the skill being learned,
- **D - Demonstrate:** Provide a visual model of the correct technique,
- **E - Explain:** Break down the mechanics and safety points,
- **A - Attend:** Closely supervise the athletes as they practice.

TeamGym coaches are encouraged to use the **TEAMGYM IDEA** acronym to introduce new movements safely to beginners:

- **T - Teammate:** Success is shared; you are never alone on the Floor;
 - **E - Everyone:** An inclusive environment where every ability level has a role and value;
 - **A - Atmosphere:** Creating positive music-filled „vibe“ in gym;
 - **M - Memories:** Focusing on the fun, friendships and team trips outside of training;
 - **G - Group-Spirit:** Prioritizing „we“ over „me“ to bring strong social identity;
 - **Y - Youth-Voice:** Gymnasts choose music and floor choreography to increase skills;
 - **M - Mutual-Support:** Older and younger gymnasts are working together;
-
- **I - Introduce:** Clearly state the skill being learned;
 - **D - Demonstrate:** Provide a visual model of the correct technique;

- **E - Explain:** Break down the mechanics and safety points;
- **A - Attend:** Closely supervise the athletes as they practice.

2.1.2 Forms of Assistance (Spotting)

At the grassroots level, manual assistance from a coach is mandatory for all new or complex skills to prevent falls.

- **Individual vs. Group:** While individual spotting is standard, TeamGym also uses **group assistance**, where teammates help each other with stretching or basic balance elements. This builds the "spirit of trust" essential to the discipline.
- **Security Spotting:** In competition, ***coaches must be present*** at the Tumble and Trampoline stations specifically for "security spotting" to catch or redirect a gymnast if a skill goes wrong.

2.1.3 Equipment Adaptations for Beginners

For entry-level participants (Level A), the methodology allows for safer equipment alternatives to reduce the fear of injury:

- **Trampoline:** Using springboards, open-ended trampettes, or foam equipment instead of a hard vaulting table.
- **Tumble:** Starting on soft mats or lower-resistance tracks before moving to the 15-meter fiber competition track.
- **Platform Starts:** Young children or beginners often start jumps from a raised platform onto the trampoline. This is because they may not yet have the coordination to jump effectively from a full-speed run.

2.1.4 Physical and Psychological Safety

- **Strength Topography:** Focus on strengthening the "weak" muscle groups first—specifically the **abdominal wall** and **spinal column**—using submaximal loads to protect the growing skeleton.
- **Prevention of Abuse:** The program includes specific modules for coaches on the **prevention of violence and abuse** in sports, ensuring the training environment is emotionally safe.
- **Psychological Preparation:** Coaches are trained to provide **mentorship and positive feedback** to build the confidence necessary for performing acrobatic skills.

2.2 Step-By-Step Guides for the Three Apparatus

Based on the TeamGym4Health educational methodology, TeamGym is defined as a "sport for all" because it promotes inclusion across all ages, skill levels, and physical abilities. It transitioned from the broader "Gymnastics for All" category into a specialized competitive team sport that emphasizes collective success and social values.

Here are the step-by-step guides for its three apparatus:

2.2.1 Floor Discipline

This routine involves the entire team (8–12 gymnasts) performing choreographed movements to instrumental music.

- **Preparation:** Start with rhythmic and athletic drills (running, hopping, stabilization) to music to build coordination.
- **Key Skills:** Develop fundamental elements including handstands, standing balances (held for 5 seconds), pirouettes, and rhythmic jumps like cat leaps or tucked jumps.
- **Routine Requirements:** Must include at least four different formations (small, curve, cross, and large), one group element (e.g., a lift), and two different acrobatic elements.
- **Performance:** Teams are judged on synchronization, flexibility, and the ability to move as a unified group.

Floor Program have certain requirements the floor is predominantly an optional gymnastic program, which is performed on a 18m x 14m mat choreographed to music. It encourages good and smooth teamwork and expressive presentation. The Floor Program is a unity that consists mainly of gymnastic elements. The choice of elements should suit the level and maturity of the team as well as the music itself. A well balanced technical performance, properly linked movements, certainty of execution and synchronisation as well as expressive presentation should attract a good score. The Floor routine allows the choreographer a little poetic license to explore his or her hidden talents. This section of the competition is very popular as medal positions are often determined by the exactness of this discipline. It should be emphasised that all team members participate in the Floor Programme

2.2.2 Tumbling Discipline

Teams perform high-speed acrobatic series on a specialized 15-meter fiber track.

- **Preparation:** Focus on "streaming," where gymnasts follow each other in rapid succession with at least two athletes moving at all times.
- **Round Structure:** A full program consists of three rounds.
- **Round 1 (Team Round):** All gymnasts perform the exact same series of elements.

- **Subsequent Rounds:** One round must be a forward series and one must be a backward series.
- **Skills:** Series must contain at least three different acrobatic elements, such as round-offs, flick-flacks, or saltos.

Tumbling Teams perform three tumbling series on a long tumble track with good “streaming” i.e. consecutively and close to each other. Each team performs three different rounds. Each series must consist of at least three different acrobatic elements, without intermediate steps. Only six members from the team can be chosen for each of the ‘rounds’. This section can be very exciting when the gymnasts perform their tumbles close together. Each team must perform three rounds. Unlike the floor program, only six gymnasts have to participate. In the mixed competition three male and three female gymnasts must take part. Elements have values according to their difficulty – which is why there are so many straight somersaults with multiple twists.

In the first round, gymnasts perform the same series of movements. In the second and third rounds, new (often more difficult) elements must be introduced (pikes, straights, and twists). At least one round must have forward rotations and one round backward rotations. The start value for tumbling is open and depends on the skills being performed.

2.2.3 Trampette (Mini-Trampoline)

Gymnasts perform explosive jumps and somersaults from a tilted mini-trampoline onto a landing mat.

- **Preparation:** Practice approaches on a 25-meter runway and landing control. For beginners, skills can start from a raised platform rather than a full run.
- **Round Structure:** Consists of three rounds with 6 gymnasts performing in each.
- **With Vault:** At least one round must involve a vaulting table positioned between the trampette and the mat.
- **Without Vault:** At least one round is performed purely on the trampette.
- **Progression:** Athletes move from basic straight or tuck jumps to advanced twisting somersaults (half, full, or double twists).

Trampette Teams perform somersaults on Trampette with good streaming. At least one run in the Trampette program is done using a vault. Each team performs three different rounds. Only six members from the team can be chosen for each of the ‘rounds’. Again, this section can be very exciting. Each team must perform three rounds. Unlike the floor program, only six gymnasts have to participate. In the mixed competition three male and three female gymnasts must take part. Elements have values according to their difficulty – which is why there are so many straight somersaults with multiple twists!

In the *TeamGym4Health Methodology* the scoring system and the “3-year rule” are designed to balance competitive excellence with the long-term physical safety of the athletes.

2.2.4 The Scoring System

Competitions are judged based on three main scores, which are combined for the final result for each apparatus:

- **Difficulty (D) Score:** This is an "open value" based on the specific elements performed. For Level A (Beginners), each required element (Balance, Jump, Acro, Group, Flexibility) must be present, or a **0.5-point deduction** is applied to the final score (p. 31).
- **Composition (C) Score (2.0 points):** This evaluates how the routine is built.
- **Floor:** Judges look for four specific formations (Small, Curve, Cross, and Large). Missing any of these results in a **0.5 deduction**.
- **Tumble/Trampoline:** Teams must perform a "Team Round" where everyone does the same skill. Missing requirements here results in a **1.0 deduction**.
- **Execution (E) Score (10.0 points):** Teams start with 10.0 points, and judges take deductions for technical faults. In "streaming" events (Tumble and Trampoline), gymnasts are not required to stand perfectly still upon landing but must show **balance and control** as they move out of the way for the next teammate.

2.2.5 The "3-Year Rule" for Strength Training

Because TeamGym is a "sport for all" that often attracts participants at different ages, the methodology emphasizes a strict safety protocol for physical development.

The Definition: An athlete should only perform **specific, high-intensity strength exercises** (those simulating elite-level gymnastics movements) after completing **3 years of general physical preparation**.

Purpose: This rule prevents overtraining and injuries in young or new athletes by ensuring their joints and muscles are mature enough to handle the "speed-powerful" reactions required in competitive routines.

Focus Areas: Initial training (the first three years) focuses on the "topography" of the body: strengthening the **abdominal muscles, spine extensors**, and the **large muscle groups** of the trunk to create a stable "core" before adding heavy loads.

The **First Stage Coaches Course** (Syllabus 1) is an intensive **130-hour** program designed to provide grassroots trainers with the fundamental technical and safety skills required for the discipline. Duration of 35 hours for Sports technique, 10 hours for TeeamGym Rules, 25 hours for Analysis of Sports Activities, 10 hours for Special Training Information, 50 hours Motor control and Learning are included in the new TeamGym Coach Programm, created through this project.

Table 4. First Stage Coaches Course Breakdown

Subject Area	Duration	Key Topics Covered
Sport Technique	35 Hours	Warm-up protocols, movement definitions for Floor, Tumble, and Trampet, and basic strength/flexibility programs
TeamGym Rules	10 Hours	Technical instructions for competition, recognition of elements, and specific regulations for each apparatus
Analysis of Sports Activities	25 Hours	Technical evaluation of basic elements using video analysis to identify correct form and errors
Special Training Information	10 Hours	Preparation of training units and plans (weekly, monthly, and annual) specifically for basic-mid level athletes
Motor Control & Learning	50 Hours	Theoretical foundations of how athletes acquire motor skills and develop neurological control

***The Syllabus Link:** The curriculum is designed to be part of an accredited system - University of Niš (pp.10)

2.2.6 Specific Focus on Safety and Technique

Within these hours, the methodology prioritizes the following for new coaches:

- **Forms of Assistance (Spotting):** This is a core part of the **35-hour Sport Technique** module. Coaches must master the specific physical support required for every basic gymnastic element to prevent injuries during the learning phase (pp. 14, 41).
- **Injury Prevention:** While integrated into the first stage, the dedicated **10-hour "Responsibilities for Coaches"** module (further expanded in the Second Stage) specifically addresses injury prevention, the "Trainer to Trainer" approach, and the coach-athlete relationship (p. 15).
- **The "TEAMGYM IDEA" Principle:** Trainers are taught to introduce, demonstrate, explain, and attend to athletes to ensure skills are learned correctly from the start.

The final goal of this syllabus is to ensure that grassroots organizations have **skilled coaches** who can implement "safe sport programs" that increase participation while decreasing dropout rates among young athletes.

The **Second Stage Coaches Course** is an advanced **110-hour** program that builds upon the basics to focus on high-level performance, complex skill techniques, and deeper coach responsibilities. Duration of 45 hours for Sports technique, 10 hours for Responsibilities for Coaches, 15 hours for Analysis of Sports Activities, 20 hours for Special Training Information, 20 hours Theoretical Methodology are included in the new TeamGym Coach Program, created through this project.

Table 5. Second Stage Coaches Course Breakdown

Subject Area	Duration	Key Topics Covered
Sport Technique	45 Hours	Techniques for complex gymnastics skills, general strength and flexibility training, motoric tests, and field-specific tests
Responsibilities for Coaches	10 Hours	"Trainer to trainer" approach, coach-athlete relationships, and injury prevention strategies
Analysis of Sports Activities	15 Hours	Verbal and nonverbal messages in coaching and using video resources to refine coaching skills
Special Training Information	20 Hours	Training unit preparation for high-level athletes , including weekly, monthly, and annual planning
Theoretical Methodology	20 Hours	Advanced study of TeamGym Rules (TGR) and Coach Responsibilities

*The Syllabus Link: The curriculum is designed to be part of an accredited system - University of Niš (pp.10)

2.2.6 Key Advanced Components

In advanced TeamGym program - Program B (Ages 15-18) focus from basic movement to complex group synchronization and increased technical difficulty across three apparatus. Program B refer to the specific difficulty and composition requirements for high-level team performance.

- **Complex Skill Mastery:** Unlike the first stage, this course focuses on the technical execution of advanced acrobatic and gymnastic elements;
- **Performance Testing:** Coaches learn to implement motoric and field-specific tests to identify an athlete's conditional characteristics and track progress;
- **Professional Communication:** A specific focus is placed on the impact of verbal and nonverbal communication between the coach and the athlete;
- **High-Level Programming:** Trainers are equipped to design comprehensive annual plans specifically tailored for elite-level competition;

The total professional training across both stages equals **240 hours**, combining theory and practice to ensure a high standard of education for TeamGym leaders.

2.3 How to integrate health education into regular training sessions.

Integrating health education into regular TeamGym training is the core mission of the **TeamGym4Health (TG4H)** project. The methodology moves beyond just "doing gymnastics" to using the sport as a tool for motor literacy and lifelong healthy habits.

Here is how the methodology integrates health into regular sessions:

2.4 Functional "Strength Topography"

Instead of general exercises, coaches are taught to focus on strength topography—specifically strengthening the "weak" muscle groups that support a growing body.

- **Target Areas:** Sessions prioritize the abdominal muscles, spine extensors, and the pectoralis major.
- **The "3-Year Rule":** Health is protected by ensuring athletes perform general preparation for three years before attempting elite-level specific strength loads.

2.4.1 Integrated Warm-Up & Recovery Education

Warm-ups are not just physical prep but educational units where athletes learn the "why" behind performance.

- **The Protocol:** Coaches use a 15–30 minute general warm-up including aerobic activity and stretching to maximize performance and **prevent injuries**.
- **Post-Activation Potentiation (PAP):** Older or more advanced athletes are taught how explosive movements (like tuck jumps) increase muscle force for the next 4–20 minutes.
- **Active Stretching:** At the end of sessions, gymnasts perform mutual stretching, which teaches them about range of motion and **caring for teammates**.

2.4.2 Psychological and Social Well-being

The "Sport for All" approach integrates mental health and social safety into the gym.

- **The "Trainer to Trainer" Approach:** This focuses on the coach-athlete relationship, ensuring a supportive environment that reduces sport dropout.
- **Safety from Abuse:** Training includes specific education for coaches on **prevention against violence and abuse** in sports.
- **Team Values:** Because it is a team discipline, training is designed to develop a "common goal, friendship, and caring for others".

2.4.3 Categorized Health Programs (Level A & B)

The curriculum is split into specific health-enhancing programs based on developmental age:

- **Program A (12–15 years):** Focuses on developing **fundamental movement skills** and basic motor literacy.
- **Program B (15–18 years):** Shifts toward **intermediate technical difficulty** and specific conditioning.

The **Motor Control, Motor Skills, and Motor Learning (MSL syllabus)** is a cornerstone of the TeamGym4Health methodology, accounting for **50 hours** of the initial coaching curriculum.

This theoretical foundation is designed to help coaches understand how athletes acquire and refine complex gymnastic movements through several interdisciplinary approaches:

2.4.4 Core Approaches to Motor Learning

The syllabus integrates four primary perspectives to provide a holistic understanding of athlete development:

- **Neurologic Approach:** Examining how the nervous system coordinates muscular actions.
- **Psychologic Approach:** Focusing on the mental processes, such as attention and memory, involved in learning new skills.
- **Biomechanical Approach:** Analyzing the physical laws of human movement and including a brief overview of biomechanical testing specifically for artistic gymnastics .
- **Integrated Approach:** Combining these fields to understand how they interact during sports practice.

2.4.5 Key Learning Objectives

Coaches study these 50 hours to master the following:

- **Movement Definitions:** Understanding the technical language of basic elements across the Floor, Tumble, and Trampet.
- **Prospective Directions:** Examining current theories on how motor control and learning can be applied to improve performance and safety.
- **Practical Application:** Learning how to apply these theoretical principles when creating individual and team training plans.

This extensive focus on the "how" and "why" of movement ensures that grassroots coaches are not just teaching tricks, but are supporting the long-term neurological and physical health of their gymnasts.

3. SAFEGUARDING

3.1 Safeguarding Children & Youth from neglect

In the *TeamGym4Health Educational Methodology* safeguarding children and youth is integrated into the core coaching curriculum to ensure a safe "sport for all" environment. While the manual primarily focuses on preventing violence and abuse, its safeguarding principles address neglect through professional standards and structured oversight.

3.1.1 Professional Supervision and Responsibility

Neglect in a sporting context often manifests as a lack of proper supervision or failure to provide a safe training environment. The methodology counters this through:

- **Mandatory Spotting:** For security, coaches **must** be present for spotting on all apparatus to prevent injury.
- **Expert Oversight:** Strength training protocols for young athletes must be created and supervised **only by experts** to ensure they match the child's developmental age and avoid physical overload.
- **Professional Training:** Coaches undergo **10 to 20 hours** of specific training on "Responsibilities for Coaches," which covers the coach-athlete relationship and injury prevention.

3.1.2 Physical and Developmental Safeguarding

To prevent physical neglect (such as pushing an athlete beyond their biological limits), the program enforces:

- **The 3-Year Rule:** Athletes must complete three years of general preparation before performing specific high-intensity strength exercises.
- **Dosed Effort:** Strength training must be individualized and "dosed" to avoid overtraining or injuries caused by overestimating a young athlete's endurance.
- **Safety First:** The methodology explicitly states that the choice of elements should **never sacrifice technical precision** or safety in favor of difficulty.

3.1.3 Psychological Safeguarding

Neglect can also be emotional, such as failing to provide necessary support or feedback. The methodology integrates:

- **Mentorship:** Coaches are trained to provide positive feedback and mentorship to help athletes build confidence.
- **The "Trainer to Trainer" Approach:** This focuses on the quality of the coach-athlete relationship to decrease sport dropout and ensure youth feel valued.
- **Prevention of Abuse:** Specific focus is placed on **prevention against violence and abuse** as a mandatory part of the educational program for trainers.

The **Second Stage Coaches Course** (Syllabus 2) provides advanced training with a significant focus on the professional and ethical duties of a coach. Out of the 110-hour total for this stage, **20 hours** are dedicated to Theoretical Methodology, specifically covering Coach Responsibilities (RC) and TeamGym Rules (TGR).

3.2 Breakdown of Coach Responsibilities (10–20 Hours)

This module goes beyond technical instruction to address the human element of coaching:

- **"Trainer to Trainer" Approach:** Developing a collaborative methodology where coaches share expertise to improve the discipline's standards across different countries.
- **Coach-Athlete Relationship:** Training on how to build a supportive, professional bond that fosters trust and reduces the risk of athlete burnout or "dropout".
- **Injury Prevention:** Advanced strategies for maintaining athlete health, ensuring that the difficulty of routines never exceeds the physical maturity of the gymnast.
- **Communication Skills:** 15 hours are dedicated to analyzing **verbal and nonverbal messages**, teaching coaches how their communication style impacts athlete safety and well-being.

3.2.1 Advanced Sport Technique (45 Hours)

While the First Stage focuses on basic, this stage prepares coaches for higher-level performance:

- **Complex Skill Techniques:** Mastery of advanced acrobatic and gymnastic elements.
- **Performance Testing:** Learning to use **motoric and field-specific tests** to track athlete progress and identify individual physical needs.
- **Advanced Planning:** Developing comprehensive **annual training plans** for high-level athletes.
- Together with the first stage, this creates a total of **240 professional training hours**, ensuring that TeamGym coaches are fully equipped to lead "sport for all" programs safely and effectively.

3.3 Injury Prevention: Warm-up routines, spotting techniques, and safety protocols.

In the *TeamGym4Health Methodology* injury prevention is the primary objective of every training phase, from the initial warm-up to complex competitive elements.

3.3.1 Warm-Up Routines

A structured warm-up (15–30 minutes) is mandatory to maximize performance and prevent muscle or joint injuries.

- **General Phase:** Includes submaximal aerobic activity (running) to increase body temperature and muscle compliance.
- **Specific Phase:** Focuses on dynamic stretching of major muscle groups and "skill rehearsals" performed at near-competition intensities.
- **Team Protocol:** When training as a group (e.g., 10 competitors), the warm-up must be synchronized with a team leader to ensure everyone follows the established routine.
- **Rhythmic Integration:** For the Floor discipline, warm-ups are done to music to simultaneously develop coordination and rhythm.

3.3.2 Spotting & Assistance Techniques

The methodology emphasizes that both the coach and gymnast must master correct assistance techniques to ensure safety.

- **The TEAMGYM IDEA Method:** Coaches use this four-step process (Introduce, Demonstrate, Explain, Attend) to ensure athletes understand a skill before attempting it.
- **Mandatory Presence:** A coach must be present to provide manual assistance whenever a gymnast learns or practices a new skill.
- **Security Spotting:** In competition, coaches are mandatory at the Tumble and Trampoline stations specifically for security spotting during high-speed "streaming".
- **Mutual Assistance:** In the "sport for all" approach, advanced gymnasts are trained to assist younger teammates in basic skills, which builds a culture of trust and safety.

3.3.3 Safety Protocols

Specific rules are in place to protect the long-term physical health of participants:

- **The 3-Year Rule:** Athletes can only perform specific, high-intensity strength exercises after three years of general physical preparation.

- **Progressive Difficulty:** The choice of elements must never sacrifice technical precision or safety for higher difficulty values; skills must always fit the athlete's maturity level.
- **Equipment Adaptations:** For beginners, safety is enhanced by using alternative equipment like **foam blocks, springboards**, or starting jumps from a **raised platform** to avoid injuries during the run-up.
- **Strength Topography:** Coaches focus on strengthening the "weak" muscle groups (abdominal wall and spinal column) first to create a protective core for the athlete.

3.4 Strategies to ensure children of all levels and abilities to participate.

To ensure that TeamGym remains a true "***Sport for All***," the *TeamGym4Health Methodology* uses several pedagogical and structural strategies to include children of all levels and abilities, including those with disabilities.

The *TeamGym4Health Methodology* ensures that TeamGym is a "Sport for All" by shifting the focus from individual elitism to collective health, inclusion, and social values.

Here are the specific strategies used to ensure children of all levels and abilities can participate:

3.4.1 Adaptive Competition Programs

The methodology simplifies the sport into accessible levels based on the participants' background and age:

- **Program A (Ages 12–15):** Specifically designed for **non-gymnasts** at a **Beginner Level**. The focus is on fundamental movement skills rather than complex acrobatics.
- **Program B (Ages 15–18):** Designed for an **Intermediate Level** of technical difficulty.
- **Flexible Requirements:** At entry-level competitions, rules are adapted. For example, a routine might require only one element instead of three, or involve the whole team in simpler ways to ensure everyone can contribute.

3.4.2 Radical Inclusivity in Team Composition

TeamGym is structured to be one of the most inclusive gymnastics disciplines:

- **Disability Inclusion:** Both Level A and Level B programs are explicitly developed to be **acceptable for persons with disabilities**, whether in integrated or dedicated squads.
- **Gender Diversity:** Teams can be all-male, all-female, or **Mixed Teams**. Mixed teams must maintain a 40%–60% or 50% gender representation, encouraging social integration.

- **Team Size:** Teams can range from **6 to 10 gymnasts**, allowing clubs with fewer members to still form a competitive or recreational squad.

3.4.3 Equipment Adaptations for Beginners

To reduce the "fear factor" and physical barriers for new or younger athletes, the methodology allows for non-standard equipment:

- **Entry-Level Alternatives:** Instead of high-performance fiber tracks or hard vaulting tables, beginners can use **springboards, open-ended trampettes, and foam equipment**.
- **The Platform Start:** Young children who cannot yet jump effectively after a run can start their skills from a **raised platform** onto the trampette.

3.4.4 Psychological and Social Retention Strategies

The methodology focuses on keeping children in the sport by prioritizing their well-being:

- **Reducing "Dropout":** By focusing on a "fun, energetic way of gymnastics" where athletes encourage each other, the program aims to decrease the high dropout rates seen in individual sports.
- **Building Trust:** The practice of **mutual assistance**—where gymnasts help each other with stretching or basic elements—builds friendship and a "spirit of satisfaction".
- **Mentorship:** Coaches are trained to provide positive feedback and mentorship to help every athlete build the confidence needed for their specific level of ability.

3.4.5 Differentiated Competition Levels

The methodology defines specific "Programs" to match the maturity and skill of the participants:

- **Program A (Ages 12–15):** Focused on **Beginner Level** technical difficulty for non-gymnasts.
- **Program B (Ages 15–18):** Focused on **Intermediate Level** difficulty for advancing athletes.
- **Simplified Rules:** For entry-level competitions, requirements like the number of elements or gymnasts can be reduced (e.g., performing only one element instead of three) to make the sport accessible.

3.4.6 Inclusive Team Compositions

TeamGym is unique in its flexibility regarding who can participate:

- **Mixed-Gender Teams:** One of the few disciplines that officially integrates male and female athletes in the same squad (requiring a 40%–60% or 50% split).

- **Disability Inclusion:** The Level A and B programs are explicitly designed to be **acceptable for persons with disabilities**, allowing them to participate in integrated or dedicated teams.
- **Team Size:** Squads can range from **6 to 10 gymnasts**, allowing smaller grassroots clubs to field teams even with limited numbers.

3.4.7 Equipment Adaptations for Beginners

To lower the barrier to entry and reduce fear, the methodology allows for "entry-level" equipment:

- **Alternative Apparatus:** Instead of the high-performance competition equipment, beginners can use **springboards, open-ended trampettes, and foam equipment** in place of the hard vaulting table.
- **Platform Starts:** Young children or beginners can start their trampette jumps from a **raised platform** rather than a full-speed run, allowing them to focus on the skill rather than the approach.

3.4.8 Pedagogical Inclusion Strategies

Pedagogical strategies designed to move from traditional, rigid coaching to a student-centered model that accommodates diverse learning styles and abilities. These strategies focus on removing barriers to participation and ensuring every athlete/gymnast feels a sense of belonging within the team.

- **The "TEAMGYM IDEA" Method:** Coaches use a structured teaching model to ensure every child, regardless of learning speed, understands the skill.
- **Mutual Assistance:** Higher-level gymnasts are trained to provide assistance to beginners, creating a **"spirit of trust"** and a supportive social environment that prevents "dropout."
- **Individualized Strength Training:** Programs focus on "strength topography" (strengthening the core) tailored to each child's specific developmental needs rather than a one-size-fits-all load.

3.4.9 Breakdown of Current Status

The TeamGym4Health Project uses this data to tailor its Educational Methodology. For countries with "Low" or "New" status, the strategy focusses on:

1. **Lowering Entry Barriers:** Using alternative equipment (like air-tracks) instead of expensive Olympic-standard apparatus;
2. **Coach Education:** Training instructors in the TeamGym Code of Points to ensure safety and proper skill progression from the beginning;

3. **Cross-Border Mentorship:** Allowing countries with “High” conditions (Portugal) to share best practices with those at the “New” level (Serbia and Turkiye).

Table 6. Current situation of TeamGym at Project partners countries

Country	Level	Condition
Turkiye	New	Low
Croatia	Competitive Level	Low
Portugal	Competitive Level	High
Slovenia	Competitive Level	Medium
Serbia	New	Low

The TeamGym4Health Project countries current status in Discipline TeamGym:

- 1. Portugal (High Condition/Competitive Level):** Amonge these countries Portugal is a leader. A „High“ condition suggests they have the necessary specialized equipment (such as high-performance trampettes and vaulting tables) and a solid base of training coaches and judges to support high-level competition;
- 2. Slovenia (Medium Condition/Competitive Level):** Competitive scene Slovenia has an established but may face some limitation of the number of active clubs compared to Portugal;
- 3. Croatia (Low Condition/Competitive Level):** The history of competitive participation Croatia has but the „Low“ condition indicates a significant lack of resources, such as modern facilities or widespread public awarness;
- 4. Turkiye and Serbia (Low Condition/New Level):** in these countries TeamGym discipline is not recognise yet. The „New“ status means that they are currently focusing on grassroots introduction rather than international competition.

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