

What role should sport take in youth preparedness?

Decision brief · Sport Singularity pilot v0.4 · 12 September 2026

For municipal sport/youth leads and federation managers, with education and civil preparedness partners. Main population: ages 10 to 18. Decision window: 2026 to 2028; futures: 2030 to 2035.

Proposed direction: establish adult responsibilities, access and continuity first; then test a small, purposeful learning activity where sport adds value. Expansion depends on evidence of useful skills and sustainable delivery.

The EU preparedness strategy names youth and sport organisations, and the 2026 Erasmus+ work programme includes preparedness among horizontal priorities within sport partnerships. Aurskog-Høland's notice, updated on 7 September 2026, provides a concrete Norwegian example of municipal cooperation with sport. These establish policy and organisational developments, not measured child preparedness. [EU strategy, action 16](#), [Erasmus+ work programme](#), [municipal notice](#).

Three assumptions deserve reconsideration:

- Sport participation automatically builds crisis readiness. Selected trials measured psychological symptoms, with contrasting results; they did not establish general preparedness transfer. [Game Connect](#), [Gulu trial](#).
- A trusted club can absorb another public role. Capacity, activation arrangements and family responsibilities need checking before relying on volunteers.
- A facility serving emergency functions will still support normal youth activity. Alternative accessible venues and contact routes need an explicit plan.

Choices across three conditional futures

A: funded local partnerships with agreed club roles. B: schools lead preparedness, sport complements them. C: expectations grow without dependable capacity. These are analytical constructions, with no probabilities assigned.

Choice and proposed owner	A	B	C	Dependency and trade-off
Map continuity, access and adult roles — municipality with clubs	Useful foundation	Supports complementary roles	Useful if bounded	Adult time; may reveal that a club cannot take extra duties
Test a small activity — qualified education/preparedness partner with youth and club input	Conditional on resources	Integrate with school provision	Defer without dedicated staff	Skill gains must justify time taken from ordinary activity

Choice and proposed owner	A	B	C	Dependency and trade-off
Roll out a federation curriculum — federation board	Only after relevant evaluation	Risks duplication	Fails without capacity	Expensive commitments and expectations are harder to reverse
Protect participation and build coordination/referral links — club and municipality	Necessary alongside new work	Strong fit	Protects core provision	Delays some learning opportunities; review if resources improve

A bounded next step

Over the next 90 days after a commissioning decision, map one local hazard and the club's realistic contribution. A school or municipal youth-service partner would need to own an accessible route for non-members, including informal activity; test that route before claiming community-wide reach. Check who decides, who is available, how communication works and where activity continues if the venue is unavailable. No delivery owner or budget has yet been assigned.

If those conditions are met, consider an eight-week feasibility experiment in two willing settings, with an appropriate comparison activity and a four-week retention check. Select two observable skills with qualified partners before delivery. Record access, distress, adult workload and whether baseline/follow-up measurements can be completed. Skill changes are exploratory: two settings cannot separate site, staff and group differences from programme effects.

Agree feasible workload, access and measurement criteria in advance. Meeting them without unresolved adverse patterns supports considering a stronger evaluation. Pause on a serious safeguarding concern or unresolved increase in distress. Small or undetectable skill changes are inconclusive. This first experiment can justify design changes or stopping on feasibility grounds; it cannot establish effectiveness or readiness for real war.

Watchlist

Indicator and source/check	Baseline on 12 September 2026	Trigger to reconsider	Proposed owner; next check
Relevant programme awards and implementation records	Programming link verified; no award evaluated	Named resources and outcomes; a resourced school/youth-service learning lead with suitable age and access coverage favours integration over duplication	Federation policy lead, unassigned; 12 December
Local agreement plus exercise/continuity records	One municipal notice; exercised capacity unknown	Roles, access and volunteer availability tested and gaps resolved	Municipal preparedness partner, unassigned; 12 December
Comparable retained-skill evaluations	Selected symptom studies do not answer this question	Evidence against an alternative activity supports or refutes added value	Evaluation lead, unassigned; 12 December

Indicator and source/check	Baseline on 12 September 2026	Trigger to reconsider	Proposed owner; next check
Participation, access, trust and workload	Field baseline missing	Exclusion, distress, loss of participation or duties beyond capacity	Youth/inclusion lead, unassigned; before any activity, then during delivery

Stress-test simultaneous loss of communications and access to the usual venue. This is an unsignalled contingency, not a forecast. Earlier review follows a material evaluation, funding decision or incident.

The draft is based on published sources. No children, families or practitioners were interviewed, and monitoring is not operational. The full report explains evidence limits, competing interpretations and the commercial-conflict check.