Hold the Child
OUR ACTION. OUR FUTURE

COMMUNITY SUSTENANCE BRIEF · 2026



#NoChildHidden
Every child seen, safe and heard. **Our Action. Our Future.**

Ambition Sustenance 2035

Communities that take care of their Children

Breaking the cycle of poverty through child rights, community by community.

VISIBLE · PROTECTED · HEALTHY · LEARNING · EMPOWERED · HEARD

OUR VISION

A peaceful, healthy and dynamic society where the rights of children and other vulnerable groups are protected and promoted.

OUR PROMISE FOR 2035

Families reach early care, schools are safe hubs, and **communities uphold child rights on their own**, long after any single aid project ends.

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OUR ACTION. OUR FUTURE.

Hold the Child · Juba, South Sudan · www.holdthechild.ngo

Children are not poor by chance.

Poverty passes from one generation to the next when a child is born without a birth certificate, goes hungry in early childhood, drops out of school, or is pushed into early marriage or dangerous work.

After 15 years alongside families in South Sudan, and now Ethiopia, we have learned:

Children rarely stay hidden because nobody is trying to reach them. They stay hidden because the systems around them are disconnected.

WHAT CHILDREN FACE TODAY

36%

Invisible at birth

Only about one in three children under five is registered at birth, shutting the rest out of school and protection.

15%

Out of school

Only 15% of children finish primary school, and just 9% in grades 2–3 can read a simple story.

43%

Pushed into adulthood too soon

Of young women aged 20–24 were married before turning 18.

Facing daily risks

Floods, conflict and displacement push girls into early marriage and boys into hazardous herding, and leave children with disabilities out.

Source: South Sudan MICS 2025.

A CHILD IN SUSPENSE

Meet Peter*, 16

Peter returned to South Sudan travelling among refugees, with no adult to care for him. After patient trust-building, Hold the Child and partners registered him among residents of a settlement in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. For more than a year, our caseworkers have followed his clan and family names across the region to find his relatives.

Today Peter is visible to the system, yet his life remains in suspense. When clinics, schools, chiefs and border agencies do not talk to each other, children like Peter fall through the cracks.

*Name and identifying details changed to protect his privacy.

So how do we reconnect them? We build bridges.

We bring everyone around a child into one circle: **Ta Nina**, "ours" in Juba Arabic. The first community conversations will begin in November 2026 in Wau and Bor.

ONE CIRCLE AROUND EVERY CHILD

Families
Register births, keep children in school

Chiefs & leaders
Notice who is missing, rally help

Children & youth
Speak up in clubs and debates



Teachers & schools
Safe places to learn, and follow-up

Health workers
Screen, refer, support nutrition

Social workers
Protect, trace families, issue papers

Every month, neighbours sit down together for Musuliya ta Nina, "Our Responsibility". *Who is missing? Why? Whose job is it to help?* Then they act, from back-to-school drives to inviting birth-registration teams.

COMMUNITIES GRADUATE FROM PROJECTS, NEVER FROM PARTNERSHIP

1 · Establish
We bring people together and connect services.

2 · Co-lead
A community committee shares the decisions.

3 · Community-led
The community leads, We coach.

4 · Community-owned
They carry it on, We stay close.

Ta Nina is where all of Hold the Child comes together, backed by our own Foundation so we stay beside communities after grant funded cycles.

We implement
Education, Health, Protection, and jobs for Women and Youth

We learn
Community Evidence and Child Policy & Innovation Lab

We influence
The Kulea'tu Campaign and the #NoChildHidden movement

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CHILDREN BY 2035

500,000
Visible
children with birth certificates

50%
Protected
Ta Nina communities with own safety networks

−40%
Healthy
acute malnutrition

1 million
Learning
children completing basic education

50,000
Empowered
young people in decent work

Every voice
Heard
children's views shaping policy

Built on 15 years of trust. Aiming for 2 million children.

1.6M+
children reached since 2011

5,000
teachers, social workers and health workers supported

200,000+
caregivers reached

70+
programmes delivered across South Sudan and Ethiopia

Accountable and here to stay: 90.2% of 2025 spending went to programmes · audited every year · rated Low Risk in the 2020 and 2025 UN HACT assessments.

THE ROAD TO 2035

2026–2028 · FOUNDATION

3 Catchments

Launch the first Ta Nina Catchments in South Sudan, consolidate in Ethiopia, protect children on cross-border corridors.

2029–2031 · SCALE

6 Catchments

Communities take the lead; partner with national organisations in Uganda and Sudan.

2032–2035 · LEGACY

10 Catchments

Fully community-owned, linked to a regional network of leaders shaping child rights across East Africa and the Horn.

Join the #NoChildHidden movement

No single organisation can raise a generation alone. Everyone has a place in this story.

Families & communities
Register every birth, keep girls and boys in school, and lead local Musuliya ta Nina circles.

Teachers, health workers & government
Connect referrals, issue birth certificates and champion child-focused local budgets.

Partners, donors & businesses
Invest in multi-year community transitions, youth jobs and child-safe digital platforms.

Storytellers, researchers & advocates
Amplify children's voices with dignity and hold every leader, including us, to account.

"No child hidden from protection, health, learning, opportunity or hope."

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