



ENSURING CHILD PROTECTION, NO MATTER WHAT

2020 MID-YEAR UPDATE

In these turbulent times – between the COVID-19 pandemic and continued family separations – unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children remain one of our country’s most vulnerable groups. Despite the unique challenges the pandemic raises, **KIND** continues to respond quickly and effectively to ensure our clients have access to protection wherever they are in their search for safety.

COVID-19’S FAR-REACHING IMPACT

As the devastating impact of COVID continues to unfold and affect the immigrant population at overwhelming levels, **KIND** serves as a vital lifeline for our clients. Our Social Services team coordinated a nationwide response to connect clients to essential resources including mental health and medical care, food, and hygiene supplies.

KIND undertook comprehensive advocacy initiatives to help ensure the health and safety of unaccompanied children, while also combating efforts by the Trump administration to use the pandemic as a pretext to undermine these children’s legal safeguards. Following advocacy by **KIND** and partners, the Office of Refugee Resettlement made key policy changes that improved the safety of children held in their facilities, sped their release and reunification with families, and enhanced their remote access to legal services.

2020

BY THE NUMBERS


94%
OF CASES CLOSED SO FAR IN 2020 HAVE RESULTED IN LEGAL RELIEF


5,375
CHILD CLIENTS


670
PRO BONO PARTNERS


423
SEPARATED INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING LEGAL ASSISTANCE


3,200
ATTENDEES AT TRAININGS ON ASYLUM, SIJS, AND SOCIAL SERVICES NEEDS



VIEW press - Corbis News, Getty Images

We served as a leader in mobilizing opposition to the administration’s illegal return of thousands of arriving unaccompanied children in dangerous conditions - returns carried out under the guise of public health. Additionally, **KIND** led the push against the administration’s failure to postpone immigration proceedings for unaccompanied children amid the pandemic - a failure that has jeopardized the health and safety for unaccompanied children, as well as attorneys and court staff.

At a local advocacy level, **KIND** signed onto letters to support unaccompanied children who were excluded from the CARES Act, including a letter to Washington State Governor Inslee to provide \$100 million in emergency relief to undocumented Washingtonians, and to members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation urging that future federal legislation provide financial relief to taxpayers without a social security number.

FAMILY SEPARATION'S NEW FACE

In 2018, the Trump administration ripped families apart at the U.S. border with no plan to ensure their reunification. **KIND** currently assists **423 individuals** affected by the separation, including direct representation, mentoring pro bono attorneys, and providing expertise to other legal partners. In January, **11 parents** who were separated from their children and deported were ordered returned to the U.S. under the Ms. L lawsuit led by the ACLU and supported by **KIND**. They arrived safely in Los Angeles and were reunited with their children.

BEYOND U.S. BORDERS

Mexico

KIND continues to grow our presence in Mexico and serve children waiting to enter the U.S. Since 2019, **69 children** have been referred to our Mexico team for legal assistance, and the legal team continues to conduct virtual “*Know Your Rights*” presentations and intakes to potential clients.

Due to the profound social services needs in Mexican shelters, **KIND** will place a social worker in Ciudad Juarez this fall to address the critical psychosocial needs of children housed there. The social worker will also conduct a virtual series of art therapy projects to support children’s mental health.

KIND continues to build local capacity to protect migrant children, through relationships with Mexican government agencies and organizations; in 2020, we reached **322 officials** through trainings on the U.S. immigration system and the rights of migrant children.

Central America

Five of **KIND**’s local partners in Guatemala and Honduras are distributing food and hygiene supplies to individuals impacted by COVID-19. They are providing telephonic psychosocial support check-ins to children and families, and virtual group therapy sessions.

Europe

Last year, **KIND** launched a series of pro bono projects to serve the legal needs of unaccompanied children in Europe, including representation on issues including trafficking, family reunification, and age determination. In the first quarter of 2020, the project had served over 180 children and trained 134 pro bono attorneys

Now, under the guise of the pandemic, ICE is poised to impose a “binary choice” policy that forces parents to choose to remain in prison-like facilities with their children and risk exposure to COVID, or to separate from their children without any assurance of reunification. In July, **KIND** released a report on these and other family separation policies carried out by the administration as part of our continuing efforts to end family detention and separation once and for all.



Pedro Pardo_AFP, Getty Images

LOOKING AHEAD

At **KIND**, we’ve spent every moment of the **12 years** since we opened our doors to fight for the rights of unaccompanied children. Our work is far from over, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to stand with them and work towards creating a safer and more kind world for them to live in. Our efforts could not go on without your generosity and compassion.

Thank you for joining us in our fight.



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