



KIND
KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW Protecting Kids in Perilous Times

In a year like no other, **KIND** acted nimbly and creatively to protect unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children. We aggressively challenged the cruel and unlawful actions of the Trump Administration that placed the lives of children at risk, while expanding our work to best serve children amid multiple crises, from ongoing family separations to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19: A New Burden on Immigrant Children

The pandemic struck our clients and their families particularly hard with loss of income and lack of eligibility for federal services. **KIND**'s Social Services team referred clients to relief programs and distributed gift cards for groceries and emergency supplies, and conducted virtual check-ins to ensure the wellbeing of our clients, especially the most vulnerable, such as young mothers and homeless youth. Our legal team continued to represent clients and train attorneys virtually, while also helping them navigate the myriad challenges brought on by the pandemic.

2020 Numbers



95%

**OF KIND'S COMPLETED CASES IN 2020
RESULTED IN LEGAL RELIEF**



679

PRO BONO PARTNERS



KIND PROVIDED

6,877

**CHILDREN WITH LEGAL AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AND HELP AT THE
U.S.-MEXICO BORDER.**

Addressing the Continued Impact of Family Separation

In 2018, the Trump Administration ripped families apart, separating children and parents at the border with no real process for ensuring their reunification. In 2020, under the guise of COVID-19, the administration reignited family separation through "binary choice," forcing parents in custody to choose to remain in prison-like facilities with their children and risk exposure to COVID, or to allow their children to be released separately with no assurance of reunification. **KIND** fought this illegal tactic, continued to represent separated children, and searched for hundreds of separated families that the government still has not tracked down.

*Honduran asylum seeking children forced to wait in Mexico. Picture taken December 7, 2019. REUTERS/Veronica G. Cardenas

Policy & Advocacy: Advancing Solutions at International, National, and Local Levels

Amid ongoing attacks on protections for unaccompanied children, **KIND** engaged new partners and allies, including child welfare professionals, faith-based organizations, and medical associations. **KIND** increased its state-level advocacy, including for COVID-related relief for immigrants in Washington and Massachusetts. In advance of a new administration, **KIND** released **Blueprint: Concrete Steps to Protect Unaccompanied Children on the Move**, outlining key policy recommendations to ensure unaccompanied children are protected at every stage of their migration journey.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS: Protecting Children Wherever They Are

MEXICO

KIND launched programming in Mexico to promote the rights of unaccompanied migrant children in Mexico and stranded at the U.S.-Mexico border. We provided legal orientations, informing children of their rights and helping to ensure they gain access to legal representation and social services. **KIND** also trained government agencies and international organizations about the U.S. legal system and best practices working with unaccompanied children.

CENTRAL AMERICA

In response to COVID-19, **KIND**'s partner organizations in Guatemala and Honduras distributed food baskets and basic hygiene and sanitation supplies. Partners also communicated public health messages to multiple communities, making creative use of radio and print. Organizations continued their sexual and gender-based violence prevention work by providing educational materials to local schools for distribution to families. Partners also provided telephonic psychosocial support and check-ins to children and families, as well as virtual group therapy sessions.

EUROPE

Kids in Need of Defense UK increased its capacity to help children across the United Kingdom, adding a fifth UK hub in Manchester, and aiding 272 adults and 505 children.

KIND's partnerships with leading nonprofits in Europe succeeded in helping hundreds of children from more than 21 countries, supporting them as they seek to reunify with family, secure protection, and access basic rights. With partner organizations in Ireland, France, Belgium, and Greece, **KIND** trained 242 lawyers and engaged private sector partners to work on cases.

With our Belgian partner, **KIND** also **released recommendations** for serving unaccompanied children at European Union borders.

KIND is breaking new ground in pro bono representation, which traditionally has not been a focus in Europe.

Litigating for Children's Rights

KIND's growing national litigation portfolio is an essential new front in our efforts to protect unaccompanied children's rights. **KIND** experts have filed declarations in cases across the country, including a challenge to the illegal expulsion of thousands of children at the U.S.-Mexico border under a decades old public health law. **KIND** also filed an amicus brief to uphold children's ability to access asylum and joined numerous amicus briefs on vital issues.



Leandro's Story

Leandro* fled to the U.S. when he was 15 years old after being threatened and extorted by gangs and the police in El Salvador. **KIND** fought for his asylum case and successfully helped him gain U.S. protection. Leandro went on to take college courses and enlisted with the U.S. Marines. He said,

"I want to show that people who come to the U.S. from other countries come here to succeed and do good and help others."

**name changed to protect identity*