



whose mission is to ensure that children who come to the U.S. without a parent or guardian have a lawyer to help them navigate the immigration justice system.

“We had to kind of step back and look at what we were doing and make sure we were doing it effectively,” KIND executive director Wendy Young says. “It was great because [Seyfarth Shaw] already had a system through which we could do this.”

In recent years the law firm has been applying SeyfarthLean to its work with billable clients to increase value, service and efficiencies, as well as to improve the predictability of fees.

The methodology uses process mapping to break an operation down to its constituent steps; root-cause analysis; collection of data such as the resources, people and tools that implement and support the process; and innovative technologies, including display on the user’s computer so that at any given step one can see what task needs to be done and can instantly access any template documents, memos or resources needed.

Last fall a team of Seyfarth lawyers and project managers using that plan completed a yearlong pro bono project aimed at helping KIND operate more efficiently and consistently across its seven field offices nationwide, says Seyfarth’s Chicago-based pro bono and philanthropy partner Allegra R. Rich, who led the project.

KIND, founded in 2008 by Microsoft Corp. and actress Angelina Jolie, recruits and matches volunteer attorneys with unaccompanied children in immigration court proceedings. It also trains and mentors those attorneys for the duration of a case. Seyfarth is among KIND’s 120 law-firm and

legal-department partners whose lawyers serve as pro bono counsel on individual immigration matters.

As a result of the firm’s collaboration, Rich says, KIND attorneys have access to a newly created extranet containing step-by-step maps of the tasks to be done. The site also contains translated documents, links to helpful websites and a discussion board.

“The really cool thing about this project was the opportunity to help the entire operation and to feel that we were making a difference at a broader level,” Rich says. “Our hope is that these process improvements ... will allow KIND to serve more unaccompanied immigrant children, and to recruit, train and mentor a larger pool of attorneys.”

To date KIND has trained more than 3,400 lawyers to handle immigration matters on behalf of as many minors, Young says. About 8,000 unaccompanied immigrant children who come to the U.S. each year are placed in federal custody and required to face immigration proceedings; more than half are without a lawyer, she says.

“That is devastating because kids that are represented by counsel are three times more likely to obtain some relief,” Young says.

Young adds that the SeyfarthLean project shows how law firms can be creative in their pro bono programs.

“Law firms have so many different types of expertise in-house that can benefit a group like ours,” she says. “It’s an interesting challenge to the law firm community to think outside of the box and think of what other kind of value they can bring to nonprofits.” ■