



September 2, 2021

International Federation of Business and Professional Women  
Attn. President Bosshart and Executive

Dear Madam President Bosshart and Executive:

The Executive Committee of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW-USA) sends formal appreciation and gratitude for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's joint statement to the United Nations expressing deep concern for the women and girls of Afghanistan.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is at the top of our minds in the United States of America and we know that it has, and will, continue to risk the lives and well-being of Afghan women and girls. The press, angry polemic and discourse, and more has created a potential for a tense acceptance of America and by Americans. We stand with you and wish to officially add our supportive voices.

In addition to expressing our concern and advocating for Afghan women and girls, we are taking concrete steps to be relevant and active during this time of crisis. We are spearheading an initiative through NFBPWC-USA to be present and welcoming for refugees who come to the United States. Our organization, with its national reach, is well-placed to effectively do so. We especially seek to support and mentor young women who are finishing their studies and starting their careers here. We also plan to advocate for and mentor business and professional women who may find unexpected and unanticipated challenges in the transition from who they were, through who they are as refugees, to who they can become in America. The USA has much to offer them, but as new migrants, they could have a steep learning curve and face pre-conceptions which we are positioned to alleviate in an empowering manner.

NFBPWC would like to officially recognize the leaders of the NYC affiliate and the NYC interns for presenting us with an opportunity to empower Afghan women at a time of most dire need. President Megan Shellman-Rickard has appointed a special committee to work on these efforts with Co-Chairs Nermin Ahmad and Voyka Soto from NFBPWC-NYC. The special committee will be working with the NFBPWC Executive Committee and DEI Chair Sher Singh on this project, along with members from across the United States. Although this initiative was only presented one week ago, on August 29<sup>th</sup>, to the National organization, we have made huge progress with a small and dedicated special committee. This committee, inspired by the passion and energy exhibited by our Young BPWs, are creating an action based initiative that will have a positive impact for the displaced Afghan women and girls in the USA.



Specifically, we will be working towards the following proactive goals with the intention of sharing the framework globally in the hopes of inspiring similar projects in other countries:

1. **Guidebook:** How to shortcut the adaptation process – stories and life hacks from other immigrant women, many of whom were deeply religious, who arrived to start a life here. The proposed guidebook will look at common perceptions and misperceptions and will explain fundamental differences that are commonly experienced.
2. **Advocacy:** Our robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will provide cultural competency training for NFBPWC members and individuals involved in the effort to empower and advocate for arriving women and their families. The DEI Committee will work to unite us in our goal to celebrate and embrace differences and create collaborative opportunities.
3. **Resources:** Many of the refugees could only bring what they were wearing. There is a huge need to assist them with new goods such as undergarments and with gently used clothing, particularly large scarves. They will be hosted for a minimum of two weeks once they pass screening at entry locations, and will be shell-shocked, requiring rest as the recovery and integration process begins. Many will need to be taken by the hand and introduced to the *American Way of Life*.
4. **Mentoring:** Our group is experienced in mentoring business and professional women from all backgrounds, at all levels of expertise. Our Young BPW members have the capacity to advise and connect with younger women as they get situated. Our student members are positioned to help their peers adapt to college and universities and host focus groups. Our Mentoring Program can provide an opportunity for these women to develop the wisdom and experience likely needed as they re-establish their lives and careers in this country.

We send our deepest appreciation for having the conviction and foresight to add the International Federation of Business and Professional Women to the joint statement to the United Nations. After reviewing the statement in full, we are further inspired to move this project forward as we continue to empower women worldwide, enacting both the International and USA mission statements in a positive and empowering manner. Together we can be the difference we want to see in the world. Together we are stronger.

Sincerely,

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs Executive Committee, 2020-2022  
President Megan Shellman-Rickard  
Vice President Kathy Kelly  
Vice President Daneene Monroe Rusnak  
Secretary Barbara Bozeman  
Treasurer Deborah Fischer  
Young BPW Ashley Maria  
Immediate Past President Sandra Thompson