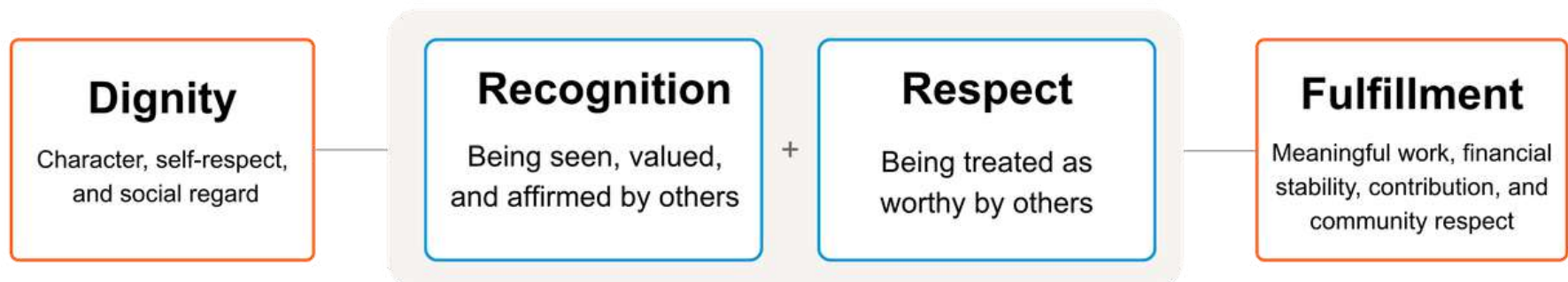


How do marginalized, young women in rural Kenya define dignity, fulfillment, and respect, and how do these definitions manifest in their professional and personal goals?

Dignity, Fulfillment, and Respect: *What Young Women in West Pokot Say They Need from Work and Life*

In 2023, Global Give Back Circle partnered with Mastercard Foundation to conduct a pilot of the HER Lab model in rural Kenya. The pilot took place in West Pokot in partnership with Purer Rays of Hope, which supported local coordination and participant engagement. Its findings, contained in this report, helped identify the resources and support needed to scale the model in Kenya. The participants are young rural women from West Pokot, between the ages of 18 and 35, who faced barriers to education and employment. Through open-ended surveys and guided journalizing—a facilitated writing practice through which participants reflected on their experiences, set goals, and worked through challenges—participants were asked to define dignity and fulfillment in their own words, describe what they were still missing, and explain what they needed from work in order to feel valued.

Across responses, respect emerges as the thread connecting dignity and fulfillment.



Participants define dignity as both internal and relational; it is lived from the inside and confirmed by the social world they inhabit. Respect is expressed through repeated interactions that make a person's worth visible: being treated kindly, having one's views taken seriously, and being **recognized** for effort, character, or contribution.

Work is the primary route through which fulfillment becomes possible.



Key Findings

80%+ link fulfillment to having a job or earning money

99% want to participate in paid work

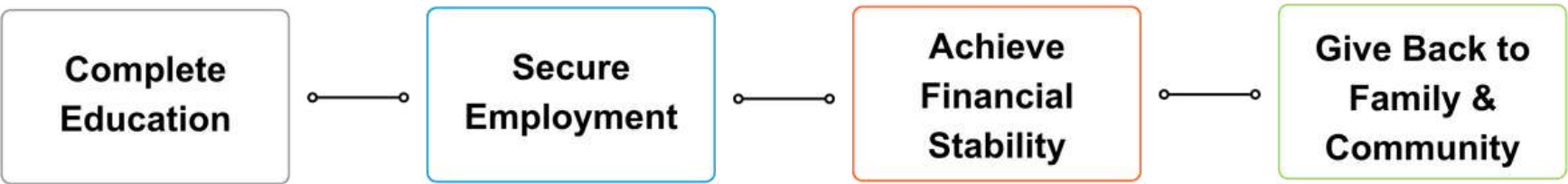
40% cited appreciation and recognition when asked to recall a moment when they felt respected

When asked what matters most in a workplace, participants ranked **respect and being valued** first, ahead of salary

Fulfillment in Practice: Having Enough and Giving Back

Fulfillment extends beyond income; participants describe it as reaching “enough” and being able to contribute beyond oneself, and earning the respect that comes with independence and meaningful work.

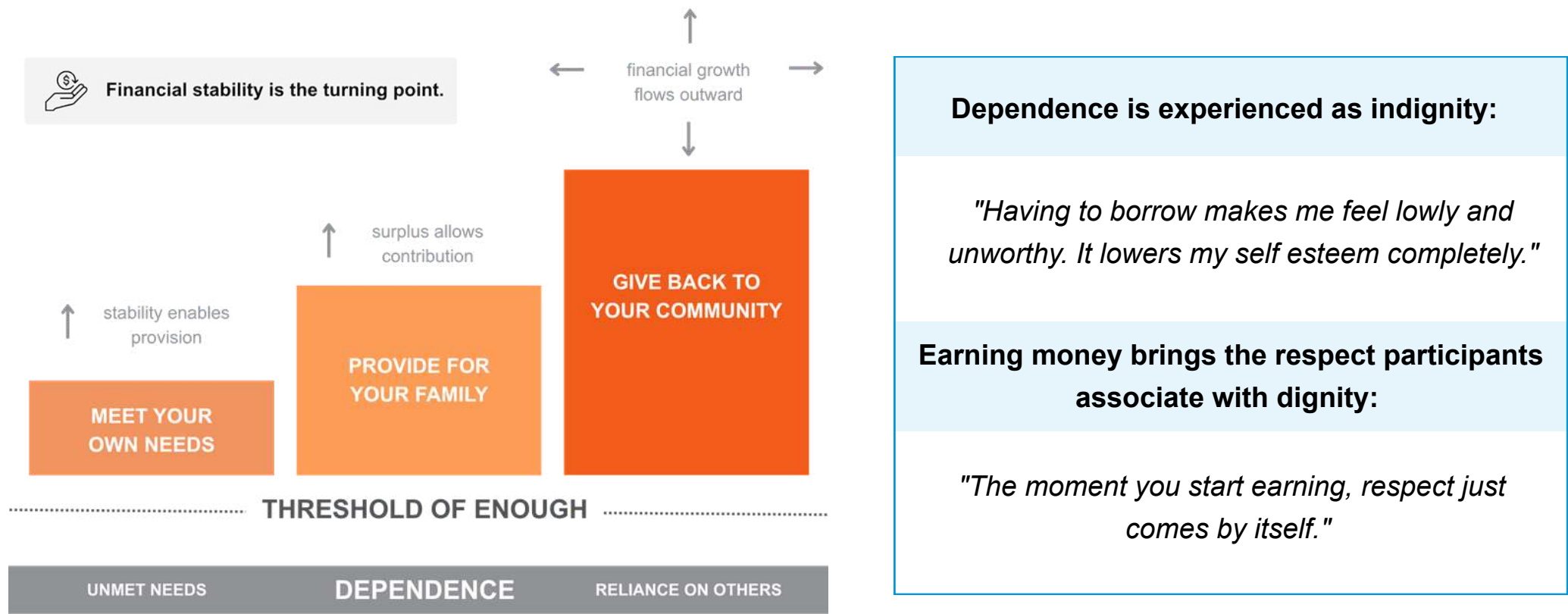
HER Vision of Fulfillment



When asked how they would know they had arrived at fulfillment, participants named three markers: **visible and tangible progress** in one's work (business expansion, loyal customers, production that does not run short); **financial independence**, meaning earning enough to make free choices, sustain oneself and one's family, and release the dependence that participants describe as a specific form of indignity; and **emotional satisfaction**, the experience of being happy in the work, at peace with colleagues, and operating in an environment that supports rather than diminishes.

The Threshold of Enough

Participants return to one idea again and again: **having enough**. This threshold breaks down into three stages: enough to meet your own needs without relying on others, enough to provide for your family, and finally a surplus you can give back to your community.



Beyond the material dimensions, **purpose and passion** also matter. For many participants, how much the work means to them is as significant as what it pays.

"Purpose for me is key, no matter the amount of money I get in my place of work if it's not making me happy or I am not feeling any fulfillment then it's not worth my presence."

Engaging in paid work is a vehicle for social recognition and dignity, as much as for income.