beyond the numbers
GLOBAL GIVE BACK CIRCLE

A Balancing Act

Holding the Home and Business Together

HER Lab's entrepreneurship pathway helps participants move into dignified and fulfilling work by building viable women-led enterprises. Through entrepreneurship training, day participants develop business ideas, strengthen their plans, and prepare to manage sustainable ventures. Grants are awarded competitively and released in installments tied to business milestones, with ongoing training and on-the-ground support as businesses begin to grow.

In February 2026, we convened **36 Day Participants** and their husbands, along with a small number of parents and parents-in-law, to clarify what the grant is for and identify the household support participants will need in order to use it well. Although one participant was unable to attend, her husband attended on her behalf, a strong indication of family support.

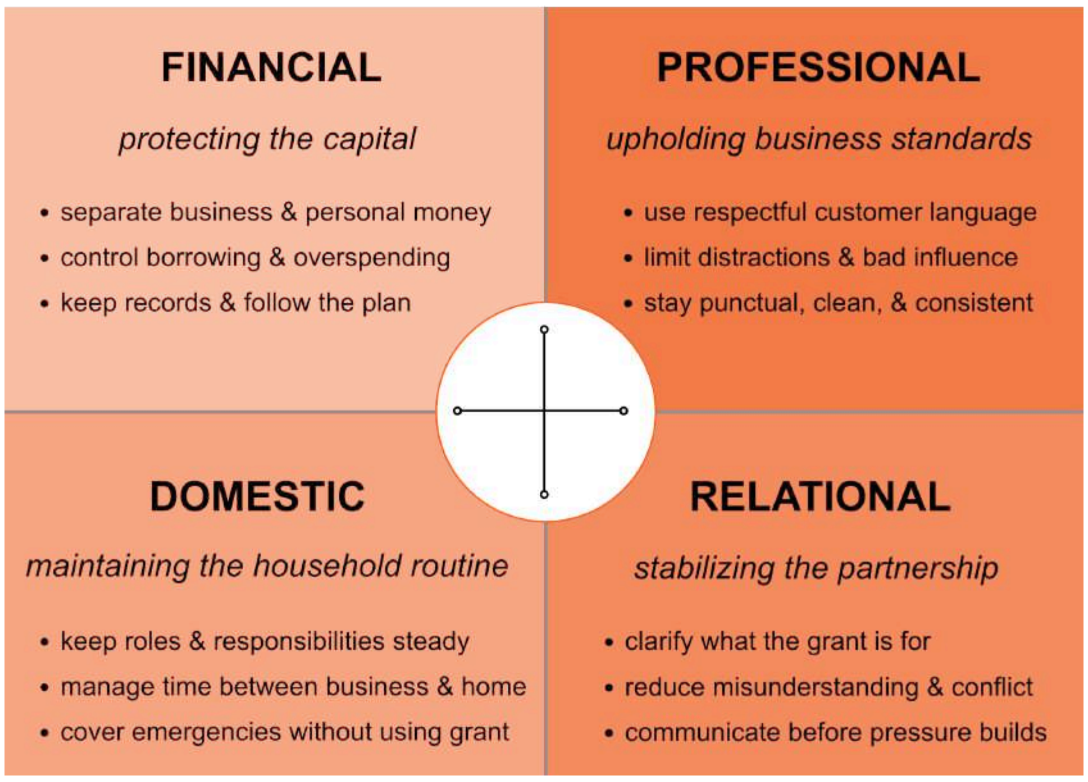
On what the grant brings to family life:

> *"It brings, encourages, and flourishes love as a result of constant income generation—this has relieved the burden."*
>
> —spouse of a HER Lab participant

Banking On Each Other: Why Families See the Business as a Household Investment

Across spouses and parents, one pattern is especially clear: the grant is understood as a **family opportunity.** Both groups described it as a route to financial stability, family well-being, and a stronger example for children. Some men extended the logic outward to community impact., like increased employment for workers hired to support domestic responsibilities. In these discussions, women's entrepreneurship is evaluated through its effects on the household, as well as on the wider community.

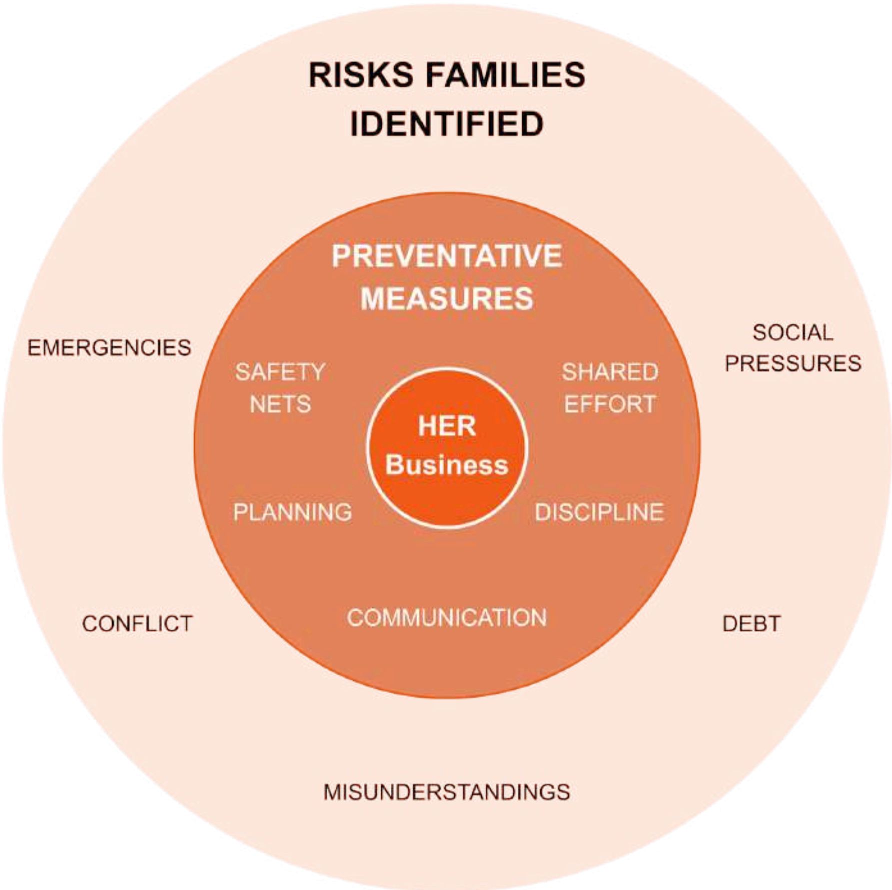
Throughout the discussion, participants, spouses, and parents identified a set of conditions for maintaining stability, clustered across four interrelated domains.



- **Families place the grant within household life from the start.** Concerns move across financial, professional, domestic, and relational domains, indicating that families see the grant as entering the full fabric of family life.
- **Household demands create the main pressure on business capital.** School fees, health emergencies, and children's needs appear repeatedly, which is why families return so often to separating business money from household money.
- **Professional conduct matters alongside money management.** Participants and parents group punctuality, cleanliness, and customer language alongside bookkeeping, suggesting that how a participant conducts herself with customers is part of what keeps the business running.
- **The relationship between spouses remains central.** Men and women, in separate groups, both return to the partnership as a point of vulnerability, and the support requested most often is clarifying together what the grant is for.

What the Convening Teaches Us

Naming these conditions also surfaced what families see as the pressures most likely to test them.



That same collective lens shapes how risk is understood. Across the three groups, several concerns surfaced repeatedly:

- time pressure
- bad influence
- family conflict
- poor planning
- debt and overspending
- misunderstanding between partners
- weak customer relations
- emergencies and school fees

Group-specific concerns added more detail:

- **Men**: financial mismanagement, behavioral change, conflict, time constraints, and public scrutiny
- **Women**: misunderstanding at home, emergencies, school fees, and the need for continued partner responsibility
- **Parents**: borrowing, budgeting, communication, customer behavior, business focus, and location

The concerns raised at this convening reveal that families converge on financial discipline, partner communication, and customer relationships as the areas most likely to determine whether the business holds. The group-specific concerns reflect each group's vantage point: men focused on conduct and conflict, women on the household responsibilities that intersect with the business, and parents on the practical habits that keep an enterprise running. The convergence matters because spouses, parents, and participants each spoke from a different position in the household yet returned to the same set of concerns, suggesting these reflect shared conditions of family life in West Pokot rather than the worries of any one group.

Continued Provision, Continued Partnership

The women asked their partners to continue covering household expenses after the grant is received. When emergencies arise, they asked that husbands consider selling livestock rather than drawing on the wife's business capital. They were explicit that a participant's new income should not become a reason for her husband to reduce his own contribution to the household.

A woman's financial success is not being treated as a reason for her husband to step back from provision. Continued partner contribution is described as part of what protects the business.

What This Means for HER Lab

For HER Lab, these insights are useful because they clarify that, while the business grant may be awarded to one participant, its success depends meaningfully on whether the people around her pitch in to offer support in all realms of life, not just her professional life. The convening therefore elucidates how women-led businesses exist within the household as well as within the market. Family buy-in becomes constructive when it helps protect the business and the entrepreneur from the pressures that could pull both off course.