

Beyond Relationships: Creating Positive Impact in Underserved Communities

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What does it mean to engage **responsibly** with underserved communities?

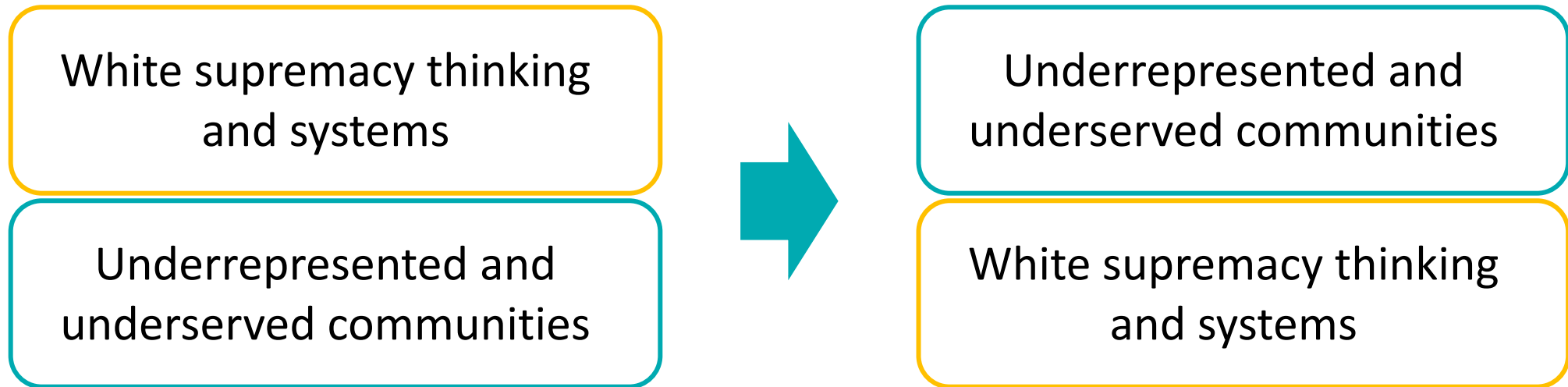
The answer is complicated and evolving

➡ we are still in the pilot phase!

One approach → Ask a brown person!

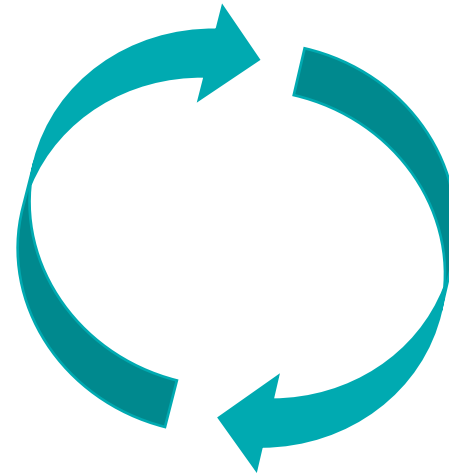
It would be very easy to fill your schedule with uncompensated opportunities to provide input as a person of color

Sometimes it is trying to directly upend systems of power



*This can leave underserved communities holding the ball
(one they didn't necessarily ask for)*

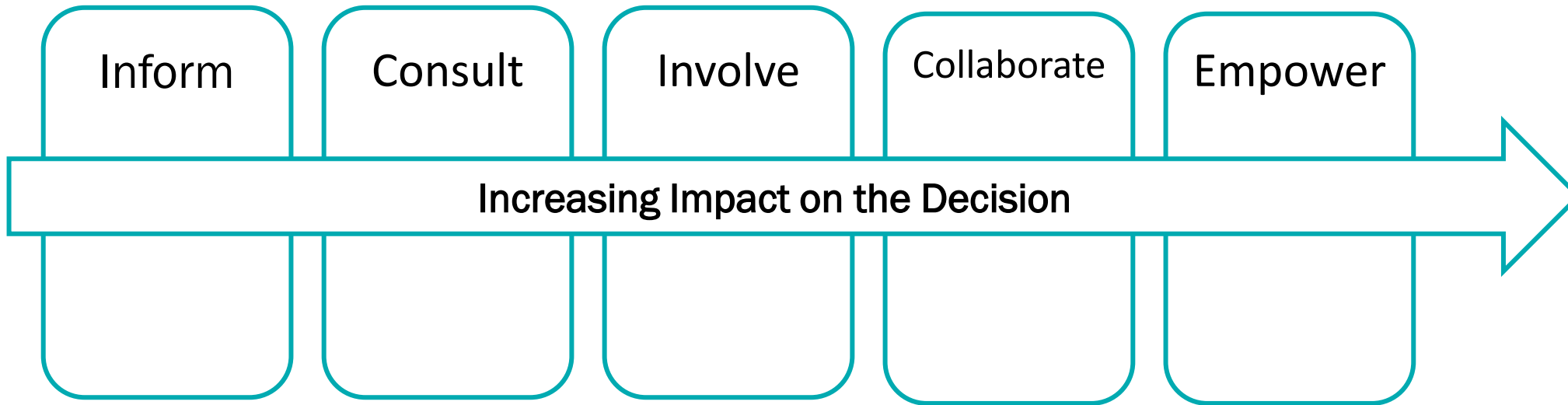
Agencies have started to focus on building long-term relationships with organizations



Agencies are also starting to
compensate community members for
their time and expertise

Check out Shatter + Forge from The Vida Agency

So, is that our goal?



IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Is more engagement always better, as long as we are providing compensation?

I think this model lacks a focus on two critical factors

- ➔ Community priorities
(independent of our project)
- ➔ Community capacity

**It works best if we start with thinking about
community interests without us in the picture!**

**Let's imagine a community organization
focused on recent immigrants**

**What types of interests do you think they
might have?**

Education and youth empowerment

Jobs and economic opportunity

Health and wellness

Cultural representation and preservation

Livable communities

Pick one of these topics – what are three ideas of how these community interests could overlap with a water utility!

We can start with jobs!



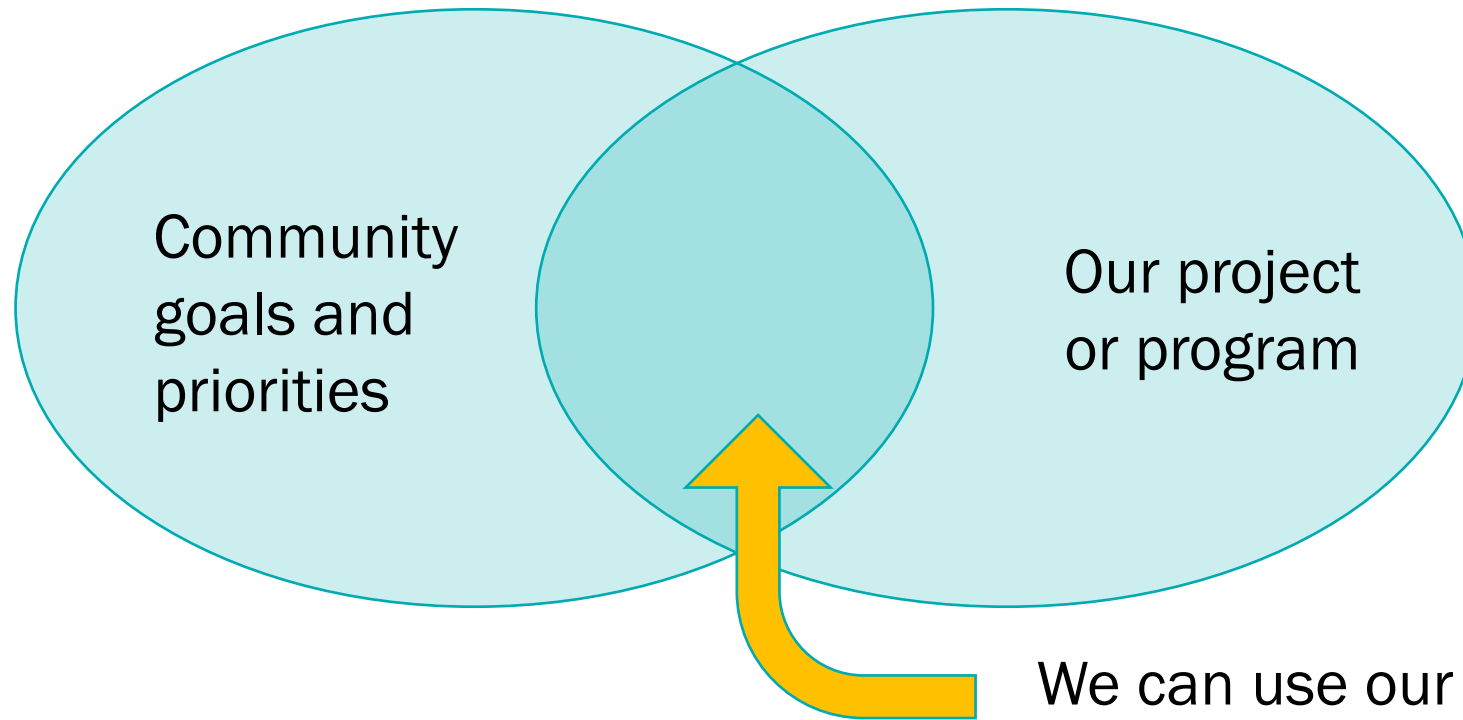
King County Wastewater Treatment Division collaborated with South Seattle College to host a job fair

Help develop the internal workforce needed by King County and skilled tradespeople for construction

It can be about project amenities and it can also be about how we do outreach

We can advocate to align our efforts with community values without having to engage community in every decision

Equity and social justice are about outcomes that align with community priorities



We can use our expertise to help figure out this sweet spot!

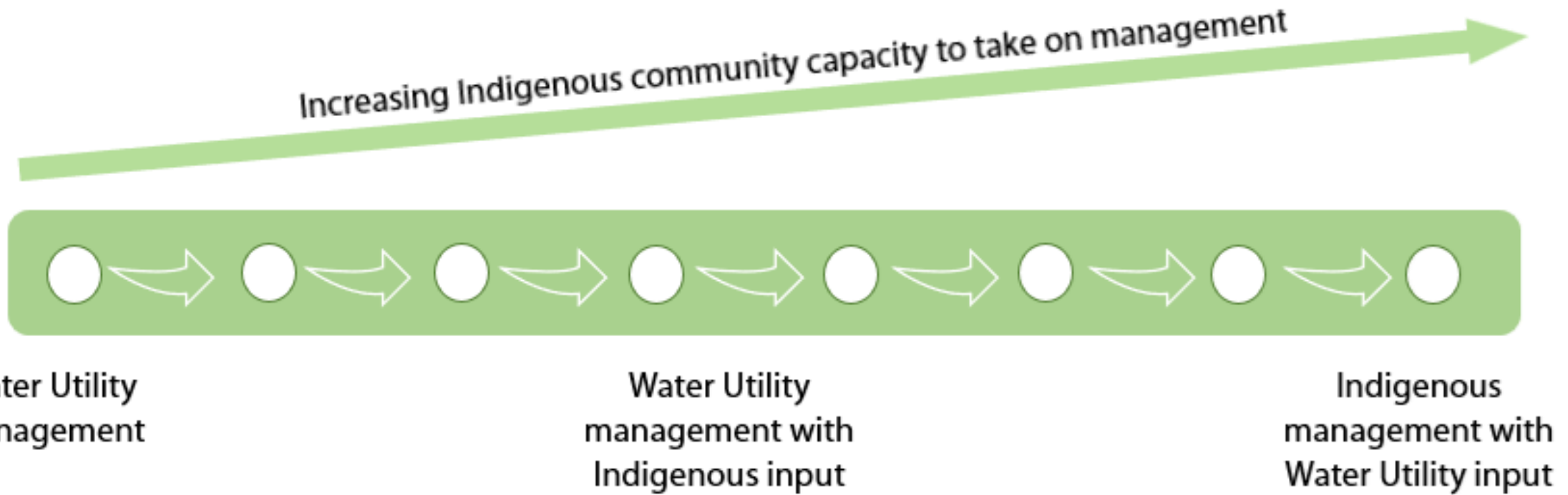
We also need to think about **community capacity and the opportunity cost of engaging with us**



ITECK Opportunities Evaluation, Kimimela Consulting

Considering community capacity means meeting communities where they are

Capacity is dynamic and our systems often are not



**With great engagement
comes great responsibility**

Questions?

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