

A Metaphor for the Society and Active Citizenship Model: The Apple Tree

By Yves Van Nuland and Grace L. Duffy

A metaphor is a tool to illustrate the different components of the Society and Active Citizenship Model (SAC-Model, see Figure 1). The model is an approach to more effectively addressing societal needs while using available country resources optimally. For a full description of the model, refer to the paper¹ "A Government Process Model: How Well is Our Country Managed?" published in the *ASQ Quality Management Forum* (Fall 2021). We use an apple orchard for our metaphor.

There are basically two parties in a country that have a specific role to fulfill. On the one hand are privately owned companies, legal, medical, and financial professions, and the self-employed; and on the other hand are All Organizations of the Public Sector (AOPS²), which create a favorable environment for entrepreneurs. The AOPS creates, maintains, and monitors regulations. In addition, the AOPS also manages common interest activities such as health, education, and culture. The first group is the one that creates economic added value for the country. A well-managed country needs both groups. Neither is more important than the other.

In the metaphor of the apple tree, we use the farmer as an example of a privately-owned company that creates added value and the AOPS that are responsible for the management of the country. The assessment of a country is done by the application of the SAC-Model. The assessment of a single organization (company or individual AOPS) is done by excellence models such as MBA³, EFQM⁴, and CAF⁵. The assessment of a single management process that leads to a Best Practice⁶ is done by the BEST-method. These three methods complement each other.



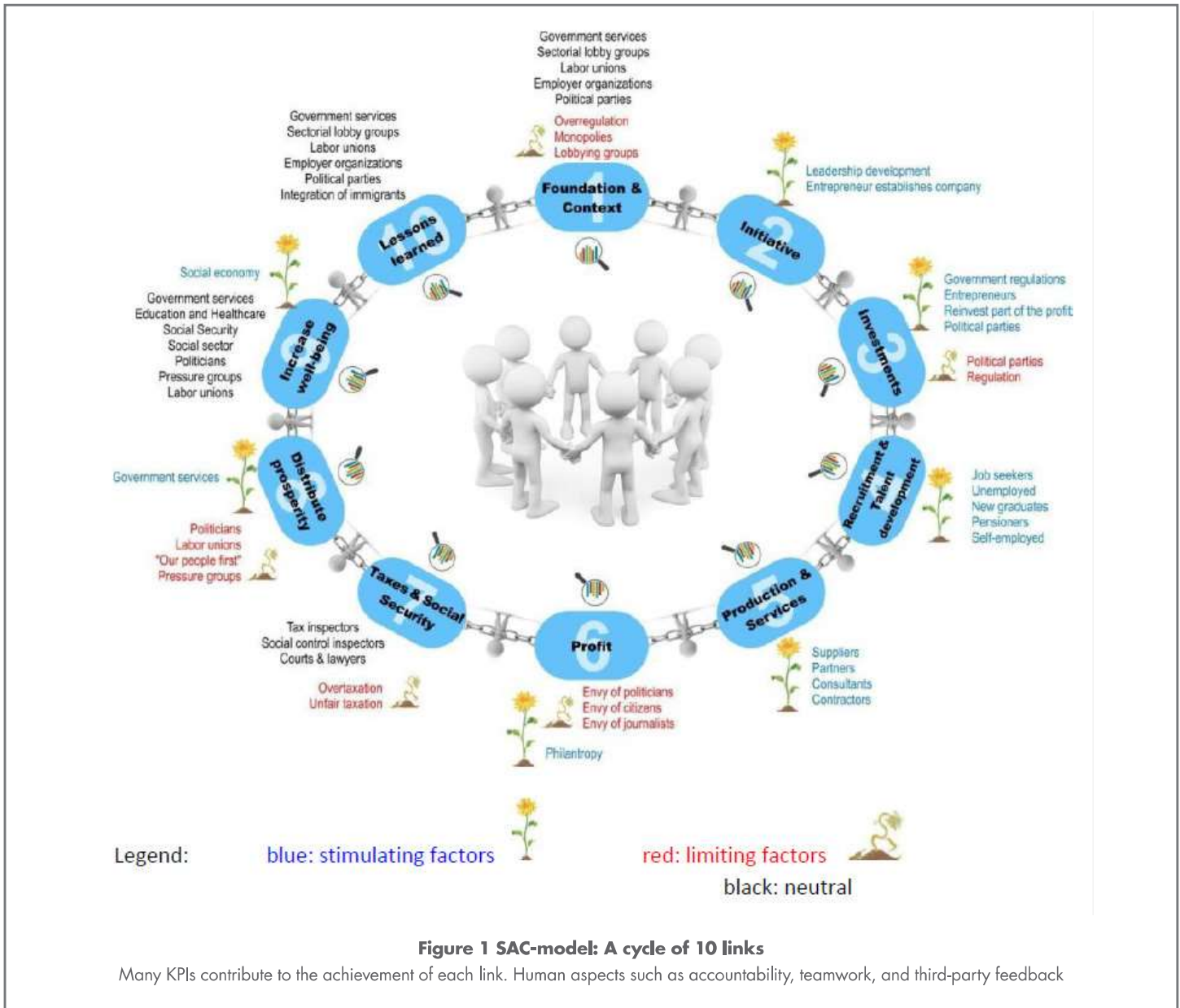
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The metaphor of the apple tree provides the reader with a better understanding of the relationship between the different links of the SAC-model and the elements implemented by each AOPS. The metaphor also demonstrates that cherry picking is not permitted. All links of the model in Figure 1 must be applied

systematically to achieve the desired outcome—i.e., excellent and sustainable results for all stakeholders in a country.

The SAC-model is applicable to all AOPS in the country since the SAC-model illustrates how well the AOPS are managed and how

they interact with all stakeholders in the country. When all AOPS apply the SAC-model effectively, it can be said that the country is well and efficiently managed.

We will now apply the ten links of the SAC-Model (Figure 1) for the apple farmer mentioned above, who represents a privately-owned company that creates economic value. The government limits the number of rules for the exploitation of an orchard. The apple farmer can get permits to run his business with a minimum of bureaucratic procedures. He uses sprays and fertilizers in a simple and legal way (link 1). He expands his business by investing in additional agricultural land and planting new apple trees (links 2 and 3). He may use seasonal workers. There are few legal restrictions (link 4). The operation of his business involves contacting beekeepers to pollinate the blossoms. The farmer applies additional sprays and fertilizers, and he picks the apples and brings the harvest to auction (link 5).

If market prices are favorable, the farmer will have a gross profit. He pays taxes on the profits (link 7). He also pays taxes and social security contributions on the workers' and his own wages (link 7). The country government where the apple orchard is located can use the tax revenues for the proper functioning and management of the country (link 8). Part of the tax money will be used for the development of education, culture, and health care (link 9). At the end of the year, the leaders of the AOPS and

farmer review what they have learned over the past year (mainly links 1, 7, 8, 9, and 10 for the AOPS and links 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 for the farmer) and where adjustments should be made for the new year (link 10).

The SAC-model describes what all AOPS in one country must do together to manage the country efficiently. However, every AOPS uses the appropriate toolbox to manage its organization individually (see Figure 2). It can also use excellence models such as MBA, EFQM, CAF, IoE⁷, or other management models.

Next, the elements that are used in the application of the SAC-model are explained for each AOPS, using the apple tree metaphor. We have explained the use of the metaphor of the apple farmer to illustrate the actions and results of the AOPS within a country.

Figure 2 explains the metaphor, but also lists 15 elements that must be realized by each AOPS. These 15 elements may be considered as 15 tools.

In the book *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*⁸, the authors Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson investigated many countries around the world, some going back two thousand years. They isolated 11 critical success factors (CSFs) for sustainable development (50 years or more) of

1. Outcome



An orchard contains hundreds of apple trees—each tree holds hundreds of apples.

Outcome of the SAC-Model:

An orchard represents a country.

Each tree represents one AOPS.

The apples on the tree represent the results achieved by the AOPS.

The objective is to manage a country or a region in such a way that all AOPS produce excellent and sustainable results in the public interest.

2. Objective



Goal

The farmer takes care of his orchard. He does everything necessary to manage it well. Each apple tree produces hundreds of apples a year.

The objective of the SAC-Model:

Each tree represents one AOPS. The results achieved for each AOPS must be balanced and in the interest of all stakeholders of the country.

3. Apple Tree Branch



All branches of the apple tree are cared for through pruning and spraying. All branches of the tree contribute to the total annual yield.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

Each branch represents a department of justice, defense, health, education, agriculture, culture and sport, welfare, non-government organizations, social economy, taxation, infrastructure, and economy.

The apples (AOPS) from different AOPS contribute to country results independently of each other (example: defense and culture).

4. Finance



The farmer checks how best to spend his resources (fertilizers, sprays, collaborators, transport)

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

The leader of each AOPS transparently explains what income he or she receives and manages the expenditures of the AOPS.

5. Apple farmer



The farmer (leader) takes the initiative to plant, expand, and maintain the orchard and to harvest the apples on time.

Applicability to the SAC-Model Leadership:

Everything starts with the leadership of an organization. The leader of an AOPS takes the initiative to actively develop the organization to meet the expectations of the stakeholders.

6. The 12 CSF



The roots of the apple tree are an essential part of the tree. The stronger the root system, the firmer the tree.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

Each main root represents one critical success factor (see list below).
All 12 CSFs in an AOPS are sufficiently developed.
It is difficult to achieve excellent results if one or more CSFs are missing.



7. Ten links



The ten links of the SAC model are the trunk of the apple tree. The nutrients run from the roots to the branches, and vice versa.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

All ten links of the model are systematically applied by all AOPS within a country.



8. Accountability



The farmer is responsible (accountable) for his apple trees and therefore takes care of them.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

The owner of each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) manages his KPIs and ensures that the planned and desired results are achieved. No excuses!

9. **SEE concept.**
Self-Reliance
Essence
Economy



A tree can only grow optimally if three conditions are met at the same time: sufficient sunlight, fertilizers, and water.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

Each AOPS systematically applies the SEE-principle. This is a tool to help set priorities and maintain the effectiveness of a decision or activity. To this end, the leaders of the AOPS check whether these three principles are systematically applied: **Self-reliance**, **Essence**, and **Economy**.

10. **Feedback**



The farmer receives advice from an agricultural expert to ensure a healthy orchard and to achieve a better harvest.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

The owner of a KPI systematically receives feedback from third parties through the organization's website.

11. **Principles**



Self-reliance of the farmer.

Not only short-term yields but also long-term economic survival and general interest take precedence. The long-term view creates added value, focusing on the essentials and continuing to invest even in difficult times. The farmer is accountable for these results.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

Not only short-term yields but also long-term general interest takes precedence, creating added value, focusing on the essentials, and continuing to invest even in difficult times. The AOPS is accountable.

12. **Optimal development**



A fruit tree requires maintenance, e.g., pruning and treatment against diseases.

Applicability to the SAC-Model:

The application of self-evaluation models such as MBA, EFQM, and CAF contributes to the optimal development of every AOPS.




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| <p>13. Results</p>  | <p>Harvest of apples Once all the previous steps have been properly carried out, the farmer can harvest his apples. The result: a large harvest of beautiful and tasty apples.</p> <p>Applicability to the SAC-Model: Each AOPS (apple in the metaphor) delivers excellent and sustainable results for all its stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>14. Orchard harvest</p>  | <p>A farmer goes for a total harvest, namely from the entire orchard.</p> <p>Applicability to the SAC-Model: A country will only deliver optimal, excellent, and sustainable results if all AOPS organizations in the country make positive contributions.</p> |
| <p>15. Ultimate proof</p>  | <p>The ultimate test (outcome): tasting and eating the apple.</p> <p>Applicability to the SAC-Model: the outcome. The ultimate test: excellent and sustainable results for the country. Illustrated in this example (picture) for one stakeholder.</p> |

Figure 2: The Apple tree metaphor

1. Legal certainty (including separation of powers)
2. Property rights (land and house ownership, money, savings, and shared ownership)
3. Democracy, pluralism, and freedom of political expression
4. Education
5. Innovation and creative destruction
6. Globalization and free trade (including free market and individual freedom of choice)
7. Inclusive political institutions (versus extractive institutions)
8. Integrity versus fraud, corruption.
9. Infrastructure (transport such as roads, railways, ports and airports, education, telecom, energy supply, water supply, sewage, water treatment)
10. Accountability of the leaders
11. Human rights and freedom of expression
12. Remuneration policy

Figure 3: 12 Critical success factors

Notice that the authors added one more CSF from personal experience: remuneration policy.

a country or region (see Figure 3). They discovered that inclusive institutions, those that seek to serve their citizens rather than amass wealth at the top, have certain factors in common. The absence of one or more of these factors means that a country will not develop in a sustainable way.

The SAC-model includes 15 elements in Figure 2 that support the ten links of Figure 1. Management of a country means that the 15 elements of the SAC-model are managed, i.e., planned, implemented, and improved. Figure 2 provides a more detailed description of these 15 elements through an apple tree metaphor: (1) objectives of the organization; (2) alignment of the KPIs and results; (3) financial management; (4) role of leadership; (5) application of the 12 CSF (Critical Success Factors) by each AOPS; (6) all ten links of the SAC model applied within a country; (7) accountability; (8) SEE-concept; (9) feedback; (10) principles; (11) optimal development; (12) results; (13) optimal, excellent and sustainable results; (14) orchard harvest; and finally (15) the desired outcome for the country.

The apple tree metaphor presentation helps you recall the relationship between the multiple aspects of healthy and holistic country management. Details of the 15 elements will be described in future papers.

References

1. Yves Van Nuland and Grace L. Duffy, *A Government Process Model - How well is our country managed?* QMD Forum (August 2021)
2. When the organization is more than 50% dependent on tax or social services funding, we call it a public sector organization. This paper refers to these entities as "All Organizations of the Public Sector (AOPS)."
3. MBA Malcolm Baldrige Award, American Excellence Model
4. EFQM European Foundation for Quality Management, European Excellence Model
5. CAF Common Assessment Framework, European Excellence model for the public sector
6. Yves Van Nuland and Grace L. Duffy, *Validating a Best Practice, A Tool for Improvement and Benchmarking*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis (2020), ISBN: 9780367443917 (pbk)
7. 2020 ASQE Insights on Excellence Category Report), ASQ Excellence, Milwaukee, WI 2021
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