

The Backyard as Boardroom: Reframing Rural Enterprise Through Strategic Value Creation

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ABSTRACT

This reflective essay explores how lived rural enterprise can function as an experiential laboratory for entrepreneurship education. Drawing from a backyard poultry enterprise in Sibalom, Antique, Philippines, the paper demonstrates how everyday agricultural practice can be used to teach core entrepreneurial concepts such as value creation, market segmentation, lean thinking, and digital marketing. Using the metaphor of the “backyard as boardroom,” the essay illustrates how low-cost commodities can be strategically repositioned into high-value niche products through differentiation, storytelling, and direct-to-customer marketing. The narrative integrates personal teaching experience with selected literature on

entrepreneurship education to challenge the perception that meaningful enterprise must begin at scale or within urban corporate environments. The paper argues that rural contexts offer powerful opportunities for developing an entrepreneurial mindset, self-efficacy, and opportunity recognition among students. By reframing backyard enterprise as a site of strategic learning, the essay contributes to discussions on experiential learning and rural entrepreneurship education. It highlights how educators can bridge theory and practice by transforming lived experiences into pedagogical tools that inspire students to recognize value creation opportunities within their own communities.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship education, Experiential learning, Rural entrepreneurship, Value creation, Market segmentation, Entrepreneurial mindset, Community-based enterprise*

INTRODUCTION

Rural spaces are often framed as places of limitation, defined by scarce resources, modest markets, and constrained opportunities. Yet within these very spaces lie powerful lessons in value creation, resilience, and innovation. In many developing communities, enterprise does not begin in corporate offices or formal incubators. It begins in backyards, farms, and small family ventures. This essay offers a reflective exploration of rural entrepreneurship through the lens of lived experience. Drawing from a backyard poultry enterprise in Sibalom, Antique, Philippines, it frames everyday agricultural practice as a site of strategic thinking, market segmentation, and value positioning. The narrative blends personal reflection with entrepreneurship education to challenge the notion that meaningful enterprise must begin at scale. Ultimately, this piece invites students, educators, and aspiring entrepreneurs to recognize that innovation is not defined by geography or resources, but by perspective. Sometimes, the first boardroom is simply the backyard. This essay contributes to entrepreneurship education by demonstrating how lived rural enterprise can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool for teaching value creation, market segmentation, lean thinking,

and digital marketing. It argues that everyday agricultural practice can function as an experiential laboratory for developing an entrepreneurial mindset and self-efficacy among students.

The Philosophy of Value

In the marketplace, value is rarely determined by scale. It is crafted through meaning, utility, strategic positioning, and the art of creating scarcity. In a local market, an egg may sell for ₱10. In my backyard, however, a fertile hatching egg can cost ₱50 (Black Australorp), ₱80 (Ameraucana), and ₱200 (Brahma). The price difference is not about the egg itself. Rather, it reflects the complexity of value creation. The premium exists because the product is uniquely positioned, intentionally produced, and consciously sought after. In the public market, customers evaluate eggs by cost per tray. In the backyard enterprise, the conversation shifts to breed lineage, traceability, production methods, and scarcity. When comparison moves from price to distinction, the egg transforms from a commodity into a curated product.



Figure 1. *Premium fertile eggs as differentiated products*

Distinctive blue and tinted hatching eggs are positioned as high-value niche offerings compared with standard market eggs. Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in fostering opportunity recognition, strengthening entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and economic mindset among students (Nabi et al., 2020; Letshaba et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial thinking does not begin in the classroom. Rather, it begins in lived experience, curiosity, and everyday problem-solving. Education simply gives language and structure to what is already possible. For me, the journey begins in the poultry yard.

The Portfolio of Breeds: A Lesson in Market Segmentation

My backyard serves as a practical example of a market segmentation in action.



Figure 2. *Backyard poultry as a diversified product portfolio*

Native chickens (left), Black Australorp (center), and Ayam Cemani (right) represent distinct customer segments and value propositions. *The Heritage Premium (Brahma and Buff Orpington)*. These breeds embody aesthetic beauty and symbolic value. Customers are attracted not primarily for consumption but for prestige, passion, and breeding potential. This defines a high-margin niche market. *The Utility Specialist (Black Australorp)*. This breed represents reliability and consistency in egg production. It symbolizes efficiency, stability, and predictable ROI. *The Exotic Rarity (Ayam Cemani and Ameraucana)*. These birds occupy a unique niche due to their distinctive traits, such as the Ayam Cemani's striking black coloration and the naturally blue eggs of the Ameraucana.



Figure 3. Ameraucana breeder, the source of the high-value blue egg niche market

A specialty breed that enables product differentiation and premium pricing through unique egg coloration.

The Resilience of the Native: Lean Logic and Surplus Optimization

While exotic breeds can add variety, native chickens form the backbone of rural enterprise. They embody lean thinking, requiring minimal capital, foraging efficiently, and adapting to environmental volatility. In our household, the native flock is a pillar of food security. Only surplus beyond family consumption is sold as dressed organic native chicken at ₱300 per kilo. What begins as extra becomes a high-value asset without compromising household needs.



Figure 4. Value addition through surplus optimization

Organic dressed native chicken positioned as a premium product derived from household food security surplus. In uncertain times, a native flock offers flexibility. Birds can be sold live or processed, creating a responsive and resilient production system. In rural Antique, simplicity is not a limitation. It is a powerful strategy for resilience and sustainability.

Digital Farm Gates: From Skepticism to Market Validation

Students often ask, “What if nobody buys my idea?” The answer lies in storytelling and market creation. I deliberately bypass the traditional market day. I do not bring my eggs to the public market to compete on price. Instead, the enterprise lives online. Through breeder networks and social media, demand is cultivated through education and storytelling.

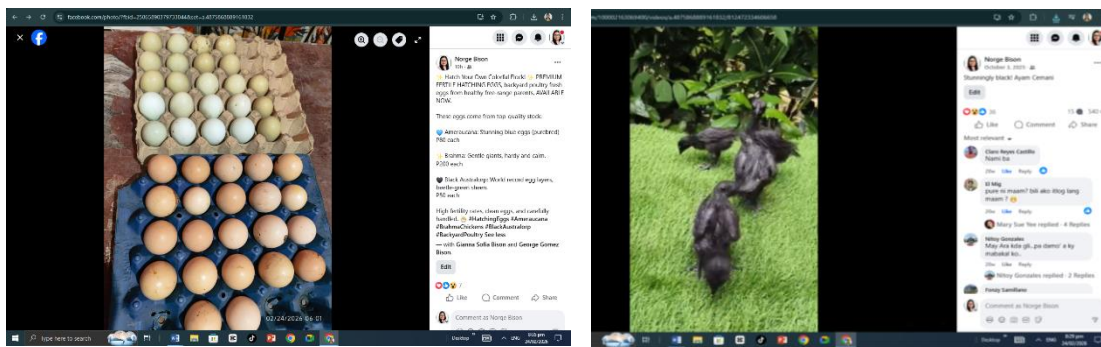


Figure 5. *Social media as a tool for market validation and storytelling*

Online promotion of premium hatching eggs demonstrates pull marketing and conversational commerce. When customers inquire through Messenger and visit the backyard to pick up orders, the process becomes conversational commerce. They are not merely purchasing a product. They are seeking a specific value. The power dynamic of the transaction remains in the backyard boardroom. True entrepreneurial skill lies in designing, testing, adapting, and sustaining a system, even amid uncertainty.

The Sanctuary of the Coop: Intellectual Capital

The journey of an educator is fulfilling but demanding. Teaching, research, mentoring, administrative duties, and family life can create cognitive and emotional strain. For me, solace lies in the rhythm of the coop. The gentle scratching of soil and steady clucking create a form of rural mindfulness. Tending chickens with my children offers clarity and renewal.



Figure 6. *The backyard coop is a site of reflection and learning*

Family involvement, young Brahma chicks, and natural foraging practices illustrate the backyard as a space of intellectual and emotional renewal. This space transcends hobby. It is a sanctuary that strengthens the mental discipline needed to teach passionately and think strategically. My yard is not only a source of poultry. It is a source of intellectual capital.

CONCLUSION

In the Province of Antique, opportunity often hides beneath the surface of the ordinary. My poultry yard demonstrates the idea that rural spaces are not limitations but underutilized resources waiting to be transformed. To my students: do not wait for a corporate office to affirm your ambitions. Your backyard can be your innovation hub. View constraints as stepping stones and leverage your resources for maximum impact. Entrepreneurship is confidence, the belief that value can be created even in challenging environments. The egg was never ₱50, ₱80, or ₱200 because of what it is. It is ₱50, ₱80, or ₱200 because of how it is positioned. Your backyard is your first boardroom. Start there.

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