

Golden in the Eyes of Many

Olympians Lesson 6 | Suggested Grades: 4-7

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

Students will....

- clarify the meaning of “social responsibility”
- learn about Daniel Igali’s life, his school-building project, and the impact he has had on the people of Eniwari
- Reflect on what they can do in their own community and/or school to demonstrate social responsibility

Curricula Links:

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Personal Planning

Materials:

- Lined paper
- Overhead of Daniel Igali’s picture (Appendix 11.1)
- Copy of Igali’s biographical information (Appendix 11.2)
- Globe or map
- Class set of news article (appendix 1.3)
- Class set of graphic organizer (Appendix 11.4)

The Big Idea

Daniel Igali struck gold at the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. However, he is also golden in the eyes of many who live in Eniwari, Nigeria, the village where he grew up. This lesson highlights the concept of “social responsibility” as demonstrated by Daniel, as well as the positive impact he has had on the lives of many underprivileged families.

Opening Motivator: Class Discussion (10 min)

Read these pointers to students and discuss.

Imagine growing up in a village:

- With four thousand people who barely scrape by on subsistence farming and fishing (explain what subsistence farming is if necessary)
- Where there are no telephones and no televisions
- Where the water they drink is from the same source where they bathe and go to the bathroom

Imagine going to a school:

- In a building that has a thatched roof and branches for walls (explain what a thatched roof is if necessary)
- Where you have to evacuate the school when it rains hard, because the rain pours in
- Without shoes, even though the floor is always wet and cold and you catch a cold all the time
- Where there are no desks to work at unless you bring your own
- You have to take your desk home every night so it does not get stolen

Classroom Activity (60 min)

1) Tell the students that, because of one man’s determination, much of this has changed. Put the picture of Daniel Igali (Appendix 11.1) on the overhead. Read the attached biographical information (Appendix 11.2). Then let the students know that he spearheaded a project to build a new school and community center in his hometown of Eniwari, Nigeria. Find Eniwari on a globe or map.

2) Ask students to brainstorm a list of existing projects and events around their school and community which demonstrate social responsibility. (E.G. food banks, donation drives, libraries, after-school programming, community centers) Through the use of the examples, discuss the meaning and impact of social responsibility.

3) Hand out copies of the news article (Appendix 11.3) to learn more about the “Daniel Igali School Project”. After students read the article once, have the students reread it and underline relevant information about the “Daniel Igali School Project”.

Teaching Tip

Encourage students to interact with the information they read by underlining or circling words and by writing notes in the margins that explain their thoughts, reactions, connections etc... Can students think of any other athletes who have participated in similar initiatives? How about other famous people who have demonstrated social responsibility?

4) Using the information from the news article, the video clips, and the opening activity, compare and contrast the life of children and/or adults in the village of Eniwari to their own lives. Use the graphic organizer (Appendix 11.4) to help organize the information.

5) Students will then use the information from the graphic organizer and write 4 paragraphs on “The Impact of the Daniel Igali School Project”.

- Paragraph 1 - Introduction
- Paragraphs 2 and 3 - Life before and Life after
- Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

Teaching Tip

When writing introductions, students can: 1) ask questions to make the reader think, provide interesting facts, 2) describe something to generate images in the reader’s head, or 3) provide a short description of someone doing something.

In the Lab (10 min)

At the “Hero In You” section on the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame website, access the interviews of Daniel Igali in the “Student Area”. Watch the interviews and have students recognize his humble nature and the fact he is very thankful for what he has in life. The interview may provide some ideas for the students’ introduction / conclusion in their writing assignments.

Conclusion and Reflections (10 min)

In their journal, students can write responses to one of the following prompts:

- Have you helped others in need? Explain how your actions have made a difference in others’ lives.
- What specific actions could you take to help those in need? Be realistic with your ideas.

Extension Ideas

- As a class, develop a plan for helping those in need: fundraise for a specific cause (animals, cancer, homeless), food drive for a local food bank, clothing / jacket / blanket drive for homeless shelters.
- Students can research community initiatives where they can volunteer on a regular basis.
- Find Eniwari on a map and have students measure how far it is from Surrey, where Daniel Igali lives. Students

could also measure the distance between Eniwari and Sydney, where Daniel Igali won his historic gold medal, and the distance between Eniwari and their own hometown.

- Students can research the Ijaw people of Nigeria and make small creative presentations based on their culture (learn some words in their language, make a recipe, share some music, etc.)
- Write a 'chat room' conversation between Daniel Igali and a student in Eniwari, who has just learned how to use the new computer in their new school.

Web Links

<http://www.igali.com>

Daniel Igali's website

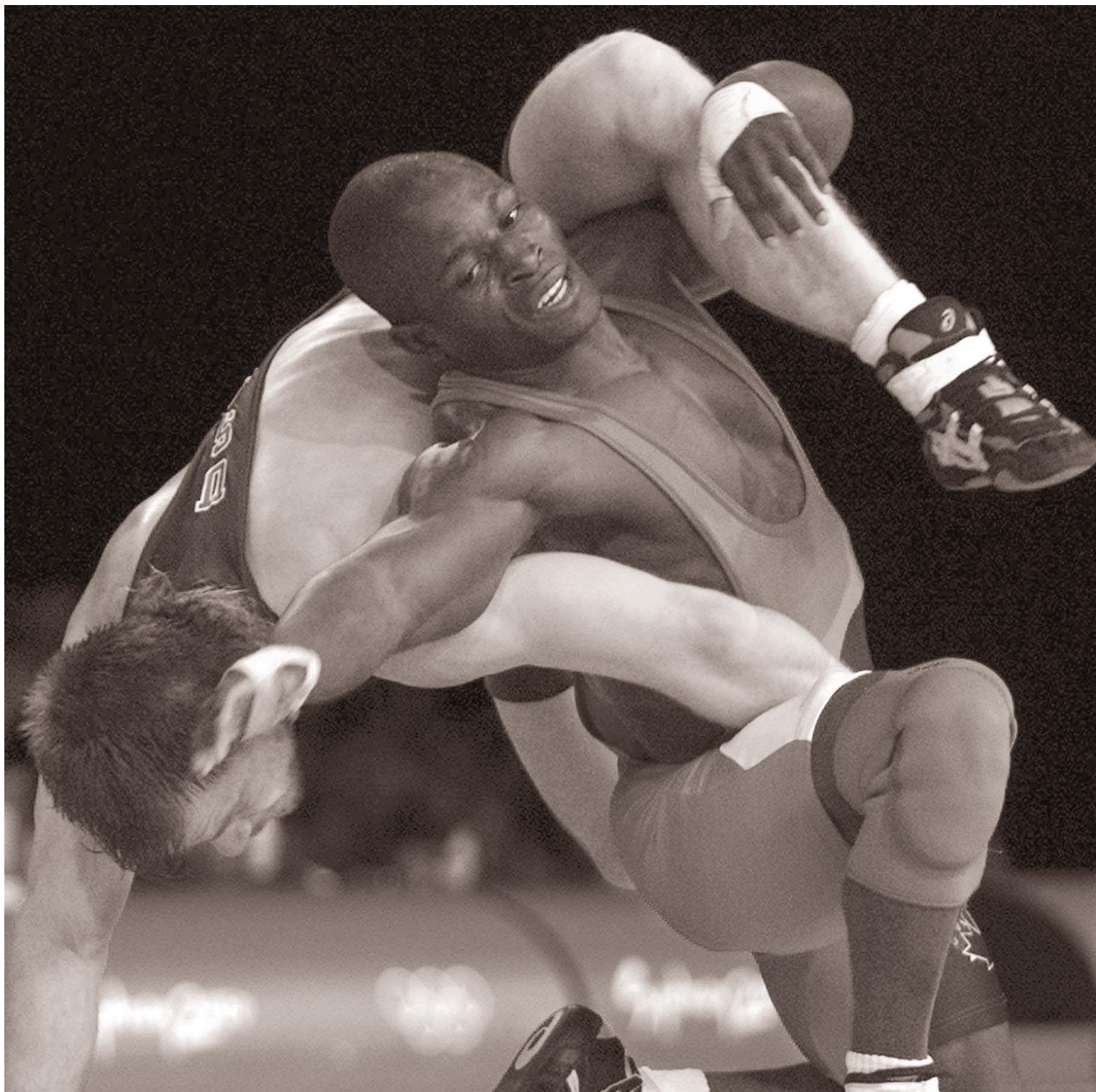
<http://esrnational.org/>

Educators for Social Responsibility

Appendices

Lesson 6: Daniel Igali | Suggested Grades: 4-7

Appendix 6.1



Appendices

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Appendix 6.2

Daniel Igali's Biography

Date of Birth: Feb. 3rd, 1974

Born: Eniwari, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Hometown: Surrey, British Columbia

Baraladei Daniel Igali was born and raised in the deep interiors of the Niger Delta, in the village of Eniwari, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. His personal quest to excel in wrestling truly began in 1990 when he was 16. In Eniwari, an impoverished community without organized sporting programs, wrestling was and still is an important part of the culture. To the Ijaw people who live in that region of Nigeria, wrestling is as culturally vital as hockey is to Canadians.

When Daniel was growing up, Nigeria did not offer competitions at different age categories. However, with a family of twenty brothers and sisters, Daniel did not have a shortage of wrestling partners! Realizing that he had talent, Daniel competed in the 1990 Senior National Wrestling Tournament and won. But it was but 10 years later that he would return to his hometown as a national hero. In 1993 and 1994, Daniel became the African Champion after winning the 62kg weight class in Pretoria, South Africa, and Cairo, Egypt, respectively. But his career didn't truly take off until he arrived in Canada for the 1994 Commonwealth Games. He finished 11th overall, but the disappointing finish was the last thing on his mind. The political situation in Nigeria was extremely volatile in the 1990s, and it was clear that pursuing both an education and career in sports there was next to impossible. Daniel made the difficult decision to remain in Canada.

A Commonwealth Games volunteer named Tom Murphy was instrumental in helping Daniel adjust to his new life in a strange land. Tom introduced Daniel to two coaches who would become close mentors and friends: Dave McKay at Douglas College, and Mike Jones at Simon Fraser University. With Mike and Dave's guidance, Daniel's record of 116-0 over three years in collegiate competition was a formidable achievement that is yet to be rivaled at the NAIA. In 1996, in the final match of the Clansman International Tournament, Daniel was beating American Terry Steiner 7-4. With less than ten seconds remaining, he gave up three points, and lost the match in overtime. It was a turning point in Daniel's career: he vowed never to be embarrassed like that again.

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Appendix 6.2

With the help of his coaches, he immediately changed his training regimen, and went on to place 4th at the 1998 World Championships in Tehran, Iran. In 1999, he placed second at the World Cup, though many believed he deserved to win. In September 1999, he became Canada's first men's world wrestling champion by winning six bouts in a row. These successive matches won him the gold medal in the men's 69 kilograms division at the world freestyle wrestling championships in Ankara, Turkey.

At the Sydney 2000 Olympics, he reached the pinnacle of sports success when he was crowned Olympic Champion (becoming the first Canadian to win a wrestling Olympic gold medal). Igali's victory dance around the Canadian flag and the kiss he placed upon it afterwards has become an iconic Canadian image. He dedicated his gold medal to Maureen Matheny, his surrogate mother in Canada, who passed away in 1999. Igali was inducted into the Canada Sports Hall of Fame in 2007.

Shortly after his Olympic win, he established the Daniel Igali Foundation and began work on building a school in his Eniwari village- The Maureen Matheny Academy. In 2002, in partnership with Canadian University Students Overseas (CUSO), which has overseen the project, he began securing funds for the school. In total, more than \$600,000 has been raised. In 2006, Igali's dream project officially opened its doors to the children and community of Eniwari. He continues to raise funds and awareness for the school and hopes to build more like it in the Niger Delta.

Igali divides his time between living in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada and overseeing the Maureen Matheny Academy in Eniwari, Nigeria. He coached the Nigerian Wrestling Team at the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Olympics. In 2020, he became the President of the Nigerian Wrestling Foundation.

Adapted from igali.com

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Appendix 6.3



Newspaper article: Daniel Igali's School Project

By James Christie. globeandmail.com. October 12, 2001

Before wrestler Daniel Igali was bathed in glory for the Olympic gold medal he won for Canada, he bathed in a dirty stream in his native Nigeria. "In my village, there's one steady running stream that people drink from," said Igali, who now lives in Surrey, B.C. "But they also bathe in it, throw their debris, [urinate] in it, everything. You can appreciate the number of infections and diseases. Any kid who makes it out of that situation, God just lets them survive."

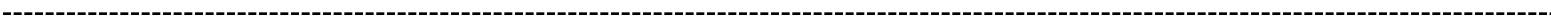
The 27-year-old mat hero vowed that if ever he made good, he'd try to change the lot of the village that raised him. On Friday, he joined forces with teacher Kevin Matheny of Mission, B.C., and an amazing 10-year-old humanitarian, Ryan Hyrljac of Kemptville, near Ottawa, to take on two major projects. They are raising funds to build a school and create a well for clean water in the Nigerian town of Eniwari.

Igali, supported by his corporate sponsor, Cheerios, is trying to raise \$200,000 and will travel to the town of 4,000 in southeast Nigeria in December to set up the projects. Matheny, Igali's "adoptive brother" from the family that took him in after the 1994 Commonwealth Games, will follow up in March with 15 students from Mission's Heritage Park High School to get construction under way.

Wells are the specialty of Hyrljac, who four years ago was so affected by his Grade 1 teacher's talk about the lack of clean water in the Third World that he set about raising money first by doing chores, then soliciting donations as a captivating young speaker. His Ryan's Well Foundation has raised \$400,000 to date and installed 75 wells.

"He's one pretty special kid," Igali said. "I always promised myself if I had a chance to help in that situation, I'd do all I could," Igali said. "Kevin had a Global Education project taking Grade 12 students to underprivileged places and he found Ryan. Getting together on this project is something I'm pretty proud about." Yesterday, Igali met with the Nigeria's ambassador in Ottawa, then attended a presentation at Hyrljac's Holy Cross School in Kemptville.

The Eniwari project will replace a thatched school with branches for walls. It calls for a six-room school building,



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Appendix 6.3

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a gym, an office for teachers and a couple of washrooms. The school will be named for the late Maureen Matheny, Kevin’s mother. Igali recalls her as “my adoptive mom, who encouraged me I could be a champion and that education was important. Like my birth mother, Maureen was a teacher. Where I grew up, we had to evacuate the school when it rained hard because the rain poured in. We never wore shoes and the floor was always wet and cold and you caught colds all the time. My sponsor has supported this project wholeheartedly from the start. They have the attitude that children worldwide should be able to learn in a safe, healthy environment.”

The Royal Bank of Canada also is supporting the project. Hyrljac, now in Grade 5, said he was motivated to start helping out in the Third World four years ago when he found out entire towns were dying from a lack of clean water when wells could be drilled for as little as \$70. I looked around the classroom and said, ‘That’s not fair,’“ he said. “I went home and asked my parents for \$70. I kept begging them. They said they wouldn’t just give it to me, but I could earn it with extra chores like cleaning branches from the ice storm.”

The first well was dug in the middle of Uganda, where he learned that children from Angolo Primary School had to walk two hours to get clean water. “I haven’t done this project alone,” he said. “I talk about once a week and try to inspire people to help. I try to make the message count by telling people to look around them at what they have in the room. To see how little it takes to change things and make them happy, it makes you want to do it more.”

Kevin Matheny heard about the Ryan’s Well project on television and located Hyrljac by surfing on the Internet. They began corresponding in May, and Matheny saw a way to combine the visions of a boy and wrestler and an educator. Matheny adopted the idea of the Global Education course from one of his own high school teachers. Last year, Matheny took students to the Dominican Republic, where they learned firsthand about living in a poor village with no amenities and no showers. Before they left, they installed Canadian-made water filtration devices to give clean water to about a thousand people.

Matheny said that in addition to cash donations, the group could use the donation of cargo space on a ship to transport donations of clothing and supplies from the Mission community and filtration equipment purchased by Ferndale Elementary School in the B.C. community.



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Appendix 6.4

Graphic Organizer - Compare and Contrast

Life in Eniwari, Nigeria	
Before	After

Collect facts in the above chart to compare the lives of people in Eniwari before and after the “Daniel Igali School Project”.