



Lucas Odhiambo monitors the offloading of a shipment of over 880,000 Moderna COVID-19 vaccines donated by the United States at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya.

© UNICEF Kenya/LameckOrina, 2021

## Protecting the vulnerable, one vaccine at a time

UN Volunteer Lucas Odhiambo serves with the communications team of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Kenya. He supports the delivery of essential services to disadvantaged children and adolescents. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, he has helped facilitate the delivery of vaccines to Kenya. Lucas shares why he is proud of the impact he is making in the lives of children and their families.

Since joining the UNICEF Kenya team in 2018, I have had a chance to provide communication support for several programmes, contributing to my professional and personal growth. Most importantly, I have been able to impact the lives of children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the onset of the pandemic, people's lives were interrupted as schools closed, livelihoods were lost and the future outlook seemed bleak. Yet with an array of vaccines now being

made available in Kenya, a ray of hope is slowly starting to pierce through the gloom. People are now able to access the vaccines, not only here in Kenya, but around the globe.



The COVAX Facility – an international effort to ensure that everyone everywhere can access the vaccines – has been integral in enhancing access to the vaccines. Through COVAX, UNICEF is working on the procurement of vaccine doses, as well as freight, logistics, transportation and storage. In Kenya, UNICEF aims to maintain the momentum towards ensuring equitable access to vaccines for low and middle-income communities who are most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic.

As part of my work as a UN Volunteer, I have been heavily involved in providing support at the bustling Jomo Kenyatta International Airport during the arrival of vaccine shipments. One recent shipment I facilitated included more than 880,000 Moderna vaccine doses donated to Kenya by the United States (US). I coordinated with partner agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Embassy and the Kenyan Ministry of Health.



I also helped facilitate media coverage for the arrival of the doses and supported UNICEF's photography, videography and social media. This helps update the public and encourage people in priority groups – including health workers, teachers and those over 50 years of age – to get the vaccination.

“ While masks still hide the smiles of children, women, and young people, I remain hopeful that we can eventually defeat this pandemic and go back to our normal way of life through the concerted efforts of UNICEF and partners to accelerate vaccine access.

Through my work, I hope more people will be able to access the vaccines, particularly disadvantaged and marginalized communities, such as those living in informal settlements and the arid regions around Kenya.



## East and Southern Africa

• International Day for the Eradication of Poverty • COVAX • COVID-19 • Coronavirus

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 1: No poverty** **SDG 3: Good health and well-being** **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities** **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**