

EDITOR: Recently, I joined hundreds of participants at the Childhood Cancer Colour Run, starting at the Uganda Cancer Institute. It was a morning filled with colour, laughter, music and energy. At first glance, it looked like a simple fun run where people gathered to walk, jog, dance and enjoy themselves. But behind the excitement was a much deeper purpose: raising awareness and support for children battling cancer. It was organised by the Uganda Child Cancer Foundation and it was truly an honour for me to be part of such a noble cause.

Many people often ask how running or walking helps raise money for a cause. The truth is that, beyond the fundraising itself, these events create awareness. They bring attention to issues that are often ignored or misunderstood. They start conversations in homes, workplaces, schools and communities. Someone may attend simply because they enjoy running, but they leave having learned something important about childhood cancer.

There is also something powerful about pushing beyond one's own limits for the sake of others. As I walked up

A run for hope and awareness

the slope from the Mulago Hospital main gate to the Cancer Institute, I found myself struggling at times. But then I remembered that I was walking for children fighting cancer every single day. I reminded myself that if my small effort could help make a difference in a child's life, then it was worth every step. In that moment, the walk became more than exercise. It became a personal act of solidarity, sacrifice and compassion. It reminded me that change happens when ordinary people decide to stand with others in their time of need.

At the colour run, there were parents, doctors, survivors, volunteers, students, corporate companies and ordinary citizens; all standing together for one cause. The sight alone sent a powerful message that children with cancer are not alone. Families going through such difficult journeys need emotional, financial and social support. Seeing a large crowd turn up for them gives them hope and courage.

The run also helped people



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understand that cancer treatment is expensive and emotionally draining for families. Many parents spend months in hospitals while trying to care for their other children and maintain their livelihoods. Some travel from distant districts to Kampala seeking treatment, while others struggle to afford transport,

medicine, food, or accommodation. Funds raised during such events help support treatment, counselling services, patient care and awareness programmes.

What touched me most was learning that there are individuals and organisations that quietly donate towards helping children with cancer. Before the run, I had no idea that people regularly contribute money, time and resources to support these young patients. Some sponsor treatment, others donate blood, while some volunteer their time to comfort children and families. These acts of kindness may not always make headlines, but they change lives every single day.

Such events also help remove fear and stigma surrounding cancer. In many communities, people still see cancer as a death sentence. Yet doctors continue to remind us that many childhood cancers can be treated successfully when detected early.

The more people hear survivor stories and interact with health professionals

during such events, the more hope replaces fear.

Beyond the medical message, the run promoted unity and compassion. People from different backgrounds came together and everyone was connected by a shared desire to make a difference in the lives of sick children. It reminded us that helping others does not always begin with huge donations. Sometimes it simply begins with showing up, participating, speaking out and spreading the message.

In Uganda today, there are many important causes competing for public attention. Yet childhood cancer deserves far more awareness than it currently receives.

No child should lose their life simply because the disease was discovered too late or because their family lacked support. Events like the Childhood Cancer Colour Run help shine a light on this challenge and encourage society to act. Sometimes awareness itself saves lives and that is why it was such an honour to be part of this meaningful event.

The writer is an educator, administrator and writer