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AWARENESS CREATION



Leveraged key cancer awareness dates and global health Observances to strengthen public awareness and advocacy efforts through both social and traditional media platforms.

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PATIENT SUPPORT



Distributed over 3,000 Cancer Education Materials (CEMPCs) to newly diagnosed cancer patients through Uganda Cancer Institute and Member Organisations.

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PARTNERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP



UCS as part of the City Cancer Challenge formally entered into an MoU with the MoH, KCCA, and UCI to strengthen collaborative efforts toward improving cancer care and control in Uganda.

EDITOR'S NOTE



The first quarter of 2026 has been a period of both progress and transition. For Uganda as a country and within Uganda Cancer Society as an organization, we continue to navigate shifts in donor priorities, evolving policy directions, and changing operational environments. These realities have influenced how organizations operate and engage, yet our network has remained steadfast in advancing its mandate.

Despite these dynamics, we have seen momentum across key areas of our work. From strengthened coordination through shared platforms, to impactful awareness campaigns and active participation in national and global initiatives, the collective efforts of our members continue to demonstrate the value and relevance of civil society in cancer control.

I would like to particularly acknowledge members who have remained active and consistent in advancing their missions. Your continued engagement not only sustains your individual impact but also strengthens the visibility and credibility of the entire network.

At the same time, this period calls for all of us to remain connected, adaptable, and intentional in how we engage. Even where operational capacity may be constrained, continued participation in the network is essential in ensuring that we remain aligned, informed, and prepared for emerging opportunities.

At the Secretariat, we remain focused on providing steady coordination, strengthening engagement platforms, and positioning the Society for growth. Within the resources available, deliberate steps are being taken to ensure continuity, foster collaboration, and enhance the value we deliver to our members.

Brenda Nandutu
Programs officer, UCS

Awareness creation

In an effort to support its coordination role, UCS developed and shared a centralized Google Calendar highlighting important awareness days. This initiative is designed to help both UCS and its member organizations plan ahead and maximize the impact of these moments for cancer awareness and advocacy.

The shared calendar allows members to actively participate by updating and maintaining relevant dates, minimizing duplication of activities, and identifying opportunities for joint engagement where similar events can be merged for greater reach and impact. It also serves as a practical tool for timely reminders, smoother coordination of activities, and fostering mutual support among members.

Through this approach, UCS is promoting a more organized, collaborative, and impactful response to cancer awareness, ensuring that key events are effectively utilized to engage communities and amplify collective efforts. Some of the awareness activities implemented in line with this calendar include:

FEBRUARY -28 UNIQUE DAYS OF UNITY

In recognition of the theme "**United by Unique**" by UICC, Uganda Cancer Society (UCS) designed and implemented a social media campaign dubbed "**28 United Days of Unity**" to amplify the diverse lived experiences of people affected by cancer. The campaign acknowledged that while cancer impacts individuals, families, and communities differently, traditional approaches to cancer care often focus primarily on the biological aspects of the disease, overlooking critical social and environmental factors such as income, support systems, and living conditions, which significantly influence how people experience and recover from cancer.

The campaign featured 28 individuals, including 7 patients, 8 caregivers, 8 survivors, and 5 health workers, who shared their unique stories and advocated for more responsive, compassionate, and people-centered cancer services. These stories were shared as short videos across UCS social media platforms, with one video released daily throughout the campaign period.

Through these personal narratives, the campaign highlighted the varied realities of those affected by cancer while demonstrating the importance of a people-centered approach to awareness, care, and advocacy. By providing a platform for individuals to share their experiences, UCS fostered greater understanding, empathy, and public engagement in the fight against cancer.

The initiative also strengthened collaboration and engagement with member organizations, including Bless A Child Foundation, Kawempe Home Care, Cancer Aid Organization, ERIC Cancer Initiative, Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja and Hazel and Amara Child Support Center. Through working closely with these organizations to identify participants, UCS gained deeper insight into the lived experiences of patients, survivors, and caregivers supported by member organizations. This engagement further strengthened working relationships and enhanced UCS's ability to design initiatives that not only support member organizations but, most importantly, respond to the real needs of the patients and families they serve.

The campaign also contributed to significant growth in UCS's digital engagement and online visibility. Notably, UCS's TikTok following increased from 50 to 867 followers, while video engagement grew substantially, with the highest-performing video reaching over 38,000 views compared to an initial average of 204 views. Increased interaction was also recorded across social media platforms through comments, shares, and direct phone calls from patients, caregivers, survivors, and members of the public seeking information and support.

This growing engagement reflects the power of storytelling in raising awareness, building community, strengthening partnerships, and inspiring action toward improved cancer care and support services.

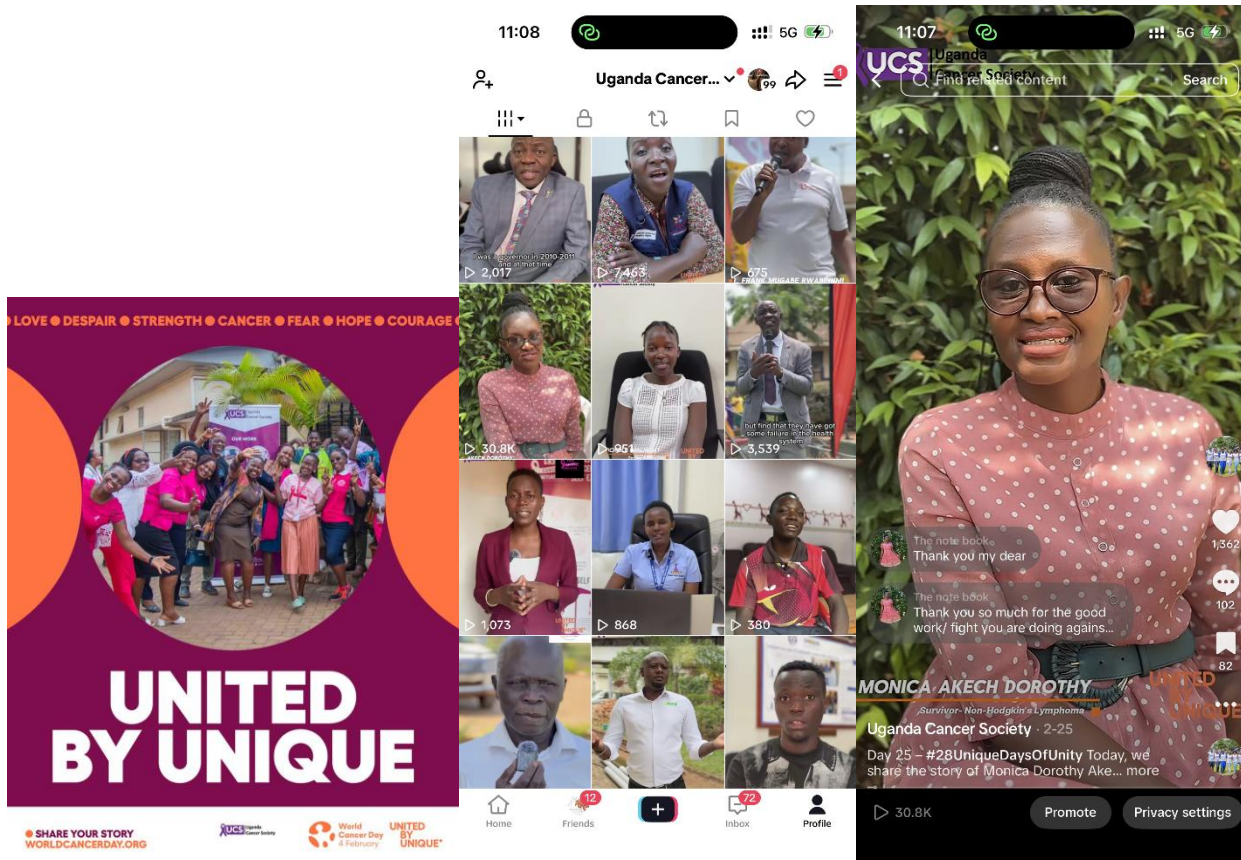


Figure 1 Screenshots highlighting selected videos shared across UCS social media platforms, illustrating audience reach and engagement levels.

WORLD CANCER DAY COMMEMORATION

Uganda joined the global community in commemorating World Cancer Day under the theme “United in Goals, Unique in Our Needs.” This national theme was adapted from the global campaign theme “United by Unique,” led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), which emphasizes people-centered cancer care and recognizes that every cancer journey is different and requires tailored approaches.

While the official date for World Cancer Day is 4th February, the national commemoration was held on 12th February 2026. This adjustment was made to ensure maximum public participation, as the earlier date coincided with ongoing national campaigns and electoral activities that would have limited engagement.

The event took place at Nakivubo Blue Primary School and brought together a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI), Global Health Partnerships formerly known as THET, Uganda Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance (UNCDA), Eric Cancer Initiative, Uganda Child Cancer Foundation (UCCF), African Women And Youth Cancer And NCDS Initiatives, and the Ministry of Health.

In the lead-up to the commemoration, the UCI conducted a three-day cancer screening outreach, increasing access to early detection services for the surrounding communities. On the day of the event, UNCDA complemented these efforts by providing general medical check-ups for other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Speakers throughout the event emphasized the collective responsibility in the fight against cancer, while highlighting the need for individualized care approaches.

In her remarks, the Acting Executive Director, Ms. Patience Asiimwe, addressed several critical areas in cancer prevention and control. She emphasized the importance of increasing uptake of the HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines as effective measures in preventing cancers associated with these infections. Ms. Asiimwe also highlighted the significant role of tobacco use in driving cancer incidence and cautioned against its use, particularly among young

people who are often targeted by the tobacco industry. She encouraged children and youth in attendance to actively avoid tobacco in all its forms. Furthermore, she recognized the vital role played by civil society organizations (CSOs) in complementing government efforts in cancer control, noting that their work strengthens and supports national response systems rather than operating in parallel. She called upon all sectors to enhance collaboration, stressing that partnerships are essential for achieving meaningful and sustainable impact.

In closing, she reminded participants that cancer remains a complex and growing public health challenge that cannot be addressed by a single entity. Despite the ongoing efforts by various institutions and organizations, the burden of cancer continues to outpace current responses, underscoring the urgent need for strengthened, coordinated, and inclusive action.



Figure 2: Left: Community members receive free medical check-ups for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) Right: The Ag.ED delivers remarks at the World Cancer Day commemoration.

MARCH - WOMEN'S MONTH AND RADIO TALK SHOW

In recognition of March as a globally observed Women's Month, Uganda Cancer Society (UCS) dedicated the month to raising awareness on cancers affecting women, with a focus on the most common cancers among women in Uganda.

As part of these efforts, UCS in partnership with Faces of Courage participated in a radio talk show on CBS FM on Saturday, 14th March, featuring Brenda Nandutu, Programs Officer, alongside breast cancer survivor Winnifred Nabikolo. The discussion focused on addressing common myths and misconceptions about cancer, including beliefs that cancer is caused by witchcraft, is always a death sentence, is contagious, or only affects older people, as well as fears that treatments such as chemotherapy cause death. It was emphasized that such misconceptions contribute to stigma, fear, and delays in seeking timely medical care.

Listeners were provided with accurate information and encouraged to take proactive steps to protect their health, including paying attention to changes in their bodies, seeking prompt medical care when symptoms arise, participating in regular screening, and ensuring girls aged 9–14 receive the HPV vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.

The inclusion of a cancer survivor's voice was particularly impactful, demonstrating that cancer is not a death sentence. Through her lived experience, she highlighted the importance of early detection and adherence to treatment in improving survival outcomes. This reinforced the value of a people-centered approach to cancer awareness, where survivor experiences help build trust, inspire hope, and encourage timely care-seeking behavior.



Figure 3: Winnifred Nabikolo and Brenda Nandutu at the CBS FM studios, discussing cancer myths and misconceptions during a live radio talk show.

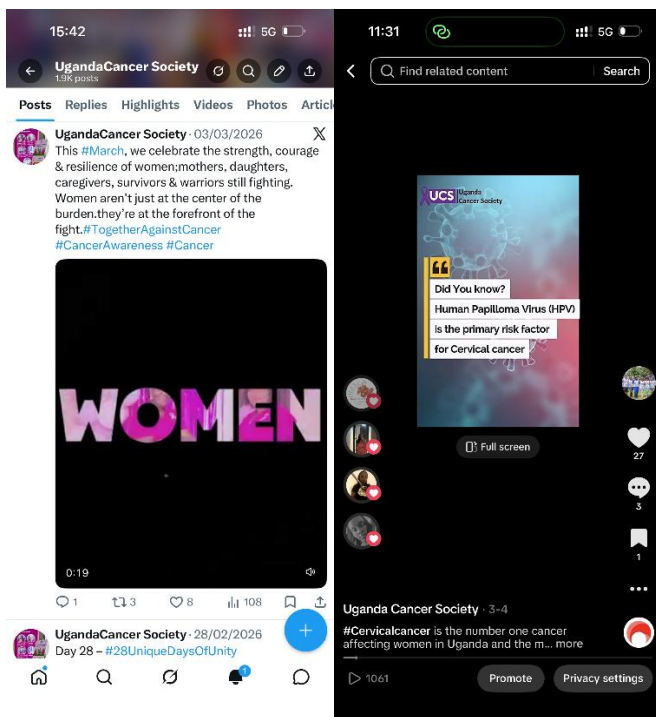


Figure 4: Screenshot showcasing selected social media content shared during March in commemoration of Women's Month.

Patient support

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and access to reliable information plays a critical role in helping patients make informed decisions, reduce fear and anxiety, and improve adherence to treatment and care. Uganda Cancer Society with support from American Cancer Society (ACS) continues to support patients through the distribution of the Cancer Education Materials for Patients and Caregivers (CEMPCs) aimed at empowering newly diagnosed patients and their families with accurate and accessible information.

During this quarter, up to 3,000 Cancer Education materials were distributed to patients. The materials provide guidance on understanding cancer, treatment processes, coping mechanisms, and the importance of psychosocial support throughout the cancer journey.



Figure 5: a caregiver at bless a Child foundation reads about how to take care of her patient

Partnerships and Membership

Partnerships and collaboration remain central to the work of the Uganda Cancer Society in advancing comprehensive cancer control in Uganda. During this period, UCS continued to strengthen relationships with government institutions, civil society organizations, healthcare providers and international partners to improve access to cancer information, treatment, care, and support services.

JOINING THE CITY CANCER CHALLENGE

On 25th March 2026, Kampala officially joined the City Cancer Challenge (C/Can) network, becoming the 18th city globally and the 6th in Africa to do so. This achievement was marked by a formal launch event and by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between key stakeholders, including the Uganda Cancer Society, Uganda Cancer Institute, Ministry of Health Uganda, and Kampala Capital City Authority, alongside partners such as the Palliative Care Association of Uganda, Hospice Uganda, Uganda Child Cancer Foundation, Ananda Center for Cancer Research, UNCDA and Uganda Women Cancer Support Organisation.

As UCS, we are proud to be part of this global movement working to improve access to quality, equitable, and sustainable cancer care. This milestone strengthens our role in advocating for patients, supporting our member organizations, and ensuring that community voices are at the center of cancer care planning and delivery.

Through this initiative, our members have an opportunity to engage more actively in a coordinated, city-wide response, benefit from shared learning, and contribute to strengthening cancer systems in Kampala. Most importantly, this partnership brings renewed hope to patients and communities through improved early detection, better care pathways, and more accessible, patient-centered services.

We look forward to working collaboratively with all partners to advance cancer control efforts and improve outcomes for all Ugandans.



Figure 6: Left: Ms. Patience Asimwe addresses participants during the launch. Right: Participants pose for a group photo following the event.

LAUNCH OF ATOM INITIATIVE IN UGANDA

Uganda has taken a significant step toward improving equitable access to cancer treatment through the Access to Oncology Medicines (ATOM) Coalition, a global initiative led by the Union for International Cancer Control. The ATOM Coalition seeks to expand access to quality-assured oncology medicines in low- and middle-income countries through coordinated, country-led approaches aligned with national priorities and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 3.4.

On 25th February, UCS witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health, the Uganda Cancer Institute, and UICC at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel. We congratulate Ananda Center for Cancer Research (ACCR) on its appointment as the national secretariat to lead the implementation of the ATOM initiative in Uganda. The initiative will focus on strengthening key components of the cancer care ecosystem, including regulatory systems, supply chain management, pathology and diagnostic capacity, and the safe and appropriate use of cancer medicines.

As Uganda Cancer Society, we welcome this important collaboration and look forward to working closely with ACCR and all stakeholders to advance its implementation. We are confident that through enhanced coordination, improved access to essential cancer medicines, strengthened health systems, and patient-centered approaches, the ATOM initiative will make a meaningful contribution to improving cancer outcomes in Uganda.



Figure 7: Participants pose for a group photo following the launch event.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the Protection of Mother Child Health Initiative (PIMOC) as the newest member of the Uganda Cancer Society, having joined us in February.

PIMOC is dedicated to supporting mothers and children living with chronic conditions through a range of impactful interventions, including awareness creation, collaborative partnerships, prevention sensitization, and the provision of transportation support to enable vulnerable patients access essential treatment services.

We are delighted to have PIMOC join our growing network and look forward to working together to strengthen support systems for patients and communities. Their commitment to improving access to care for vulnerable populations aligns strongly with our mission, and we are confident that this partnership will contribute meaningfully to advancing cancer control efforts in Uganda.

UPCOMING EVENTS

#	Organisation	Event	Date	Reason
1.	UCS (UTTC)	Commemoration of World No Tobacco day	29 th May 2026	Awareness creation and advocacy to reduce Tobacco consumption and manage the health burden associated to its use.
2.	UCS	Commemoration of Survivors day	7 th June 2026	To celebrate life, raise awareness, reduce stigma, and advocate for better survivorship support.
3.	All Members	National Day For Physical Activity	19 th June 2026	Embracing Regular Activity to prevent Non-Communicable Diseases.
4.	UCCF	Childhood Cancer Colour Run	17 th May 2026	Fundraising to support children battling cancer to adhere to treatment
5.	Albinism Umbrella	International Albinism Awareness Day	13 th June 2026	Commemoration with focus on Promoting the rights of persons with Albinism