



MONTHLY IMPACT REPORT

The Peacock Tree NPC

September 2026

Inspired by His Holiness Kadamba Kanana Swami

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The Peacock Tree NPC, Registration No. 2022/837482/08

Spring, and everything blossomed

September is spring in South Africa. After hiding from the cold winter months, it felt like everything suddenly began to blossom again.

And blossom it did.

His Holiness S.B. Keshava Swami arrived in Johannesburg, although not quite according to plan. Air traffic problems in the United Kingdom caused delays, and Maharaja arrived much later than expected.

But there was no real stopping.

A quick shower, some prasadam on the go, and Maharaja was off again, rushing to WuSA where a group of eager BYS students were waiting for him.

I always enjoy watching students when a visiting sannyasi comes. Some sit quietly, some are full of questions, and some probably do not know exactly what to expect. Maharaja spoke to them and then opened the floor for questions, and very quickly the room came alive.

There was another bonus waiting for everyone. Harinama Ruci were staying at the WuSA project as part of their two month stay in South Africa. Suddenly WuSA had become a little travelling spiritual station. Students, devotees, kirtan, prasadam, questions, laughter, and the constant movement of Harinama Ruci taking the holy names into different parts of the country.

Jaya. Bliss. Nectar.

Maharaja hardly had time to recover before travelling again. The next stop was Durban for the National BYS Retreat on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. It brought together enthusiastic students and devotees in the association of His Holiness S.B. Keshava Swami, His Holiness Gauranga Swami and Harinama Ruci.

Rukmini Devi Dasi and her team organised the weekend, and from everything we heard, there was plenty of what a good retreat should have.

Kirtan. Prasadam. Classes. Dancing. Association.

We were also happy that some devotees connected with WuSA and Klerksdorp managed to attend. It is always encouraging when devotees from the smaller preaching projects get the chance to be part of something bigger. They return home with stories, inspiration and usually a little more energy to continue.

Maharaja continued through Durban and Cape Town, doing more student outreach programmes, before returning to Johannesburg. One would imagine that after all that travelling he might slow down.

Not quite.

The day after a busy Radhastami festival, Maharaja got into a car and travelled almost three hours from Johannesburg to Klerksdorp to visit Narottama Prabhu and the devotees there.

Klerksdorp is not the biggest project and it is far from the usual centres, but preaching is happening there steadily and sincerely. Maharaja spent time with Narottama Prabhu, met the devotees, saw what was developing and was visibly enlivened by the visit.

Sometimes encouragement does not need a big stage. Sometimes it is simply someone making the journey to see you.

And last, we celebrated the famous Soweto Ratha Yatra. We are grateful to team ARYA and the dedicated devotees in Soweto who continue to assist Mahaprabhu Prabhu with the vision of Kadamba Kanana Swami and Srila Prabhupada in Soweto.

And in September, there was plenty of journeying.

The National BYS Retreat: Inner Adventure

66

STUDENTS AND FACILITATORS

11 to 13

SEPTEMBER 2026

1st
NATIONAL BYS RETREAT IN
OVER A DECADE

Students sharing what the weekend meant to them.

The Bhakti Yoga Society held its in person national student retreat at Banana Beach Holiday Resort on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. The theme was “Inner Adventure”. Students and facilitators from university outreach in several South African cities came together, and the organisers described it as the first national BYS retreat in more than ten years.

The retreat was a national initiative of ISKCON South Africa. Its BYS leadership helped inspire the effort and made a substantial financial contribution.

Two teachers led the weekend. His Holiness S.B. Keshava Swami and His Holiness B.S. Gauranga Swami, South Africa’s youngest and most recent sannyasa initiate. Madhavendrapuri Das, a yoga instructor and WITS BYS alumnus, joined UKZN BYS facilitators Vasanti Dasi and Madhurya Kadambini Dasi.

The organisers were Rukmini Devi Dasi from Durban, Manukanya Devi Dasi (WuSA House temple president and WITS BYS counsellor), Kriya Sing from Pretoria and Gokulesh Das (ISKCON Cape Town temple president and a university outreach facilitator).

The timing carried meaning. ISKCON is in its 60th anniversary year, having begun in New York in 1966. South African devotees marked 50 years since Srila Prabhupada’s 1975 visit, when he spoke to university audiences at the University of Natal’s Westville campus (now part of UKZN) and at WITS. This retreat carried that campus focus forward by asking how young adults can practise spiritual life while facing real questions about identity, belief and modern living.

The adventure begins

The retreat was announced in July, which left little time to prepare. Campuses faced different funding and transport limits, so it took last minute coordination and support from ISKCON communities to get students from Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria there. Two participants from the Klerksdorp outreach project travelled with sponsorship from the Peacock Tree, an extension of the Kadamba Foundation.

On Friday, students settled into rondavels and chalets. Keshava Swami opened with a discussion about the real situations students are living through, and invited questions instead of giving a fixed lecture. Gauranga Swami closed the evening with kirtan. The WITS group, delayed by transport, arrived around supper time and joined in.



Students connecting over shared meals.



Bonfire kirtan on the beach.

Dialogue and practice

Saturday's sunrise yoga was meant for the beach, but steady drizzle moved it into the conference room. Gauranga Swami then led a "Mantra Recharge" session on japa, the personal chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra. Students were invited to join a continuing online WuSA japa session after the retreat. Keshava Swami's discussions looked at belief, personal identity and the pressures that shape student choices.

Gokulesh felt the students' willingness to question was the heart of the programme. He said they challenged the Swamis and themselves, were brave in being open and honest, and that he could see them grow in only a few days.

Phefumlela Mpofu said it made a difference to hear a much more experienced person openly say "I don't know". It showed that there is no need to know everything at once. Hearing peers describe similar experiences also showed that these struggles do not have to be faced alone.

Innocentia Ntobela expected long speeches with questions saved for the end, and found the sessions open and participatory instead. Hearing students from other universities made it clear that she was not the only one going through difficult things. She linked the teaching that things can happen "for me" rather than only "to me" to academic setbacks, and sees disappointing results as a chance to find what was overlooked.

Wavhudi Tsibi said peers spoke about schoolwork, anxiety and fear of the future, and that this made the worry feel lighter. Wavhudi added that experienced practitioners gave students guidance and should remain part of future retreats.



Madhavendrapuri guides students through yoga.



Gauranga Swami leads morning japa meditation.

Reflection was paired with activity. Madhurya Kadambini and Vasanti led a team building session around three sources of guidance: spiritual teachers, community and sacred texts. A later debate on the evidence for God and the soul put Madhavendrapuri in the role of the atheist, affectionately nicknamed "the Tormentor". Students could test arguments instead of only receiving prepared answers.



Keshava Swami meets “the Tormentor” in debate.

Community and next steps

A bonfire kirtan on the beach on Saturday evening became one of the focal moments of the weekend. Students had privately submitted their own questions for Gauranga Swami to answer before the singing began. He later described the participants as discovering a community, a tribe, and said university outreach should help young people carry spiritual practice into their future professional and public lives.

Keshava Swami summed up the weekend as discussing, debating, eating, dancing and connecting, with everyone going home a little bit more “spiritually wealthy”.

Sunday closed with mantra meditation, participant reflections, checkout and brunch.

Rukmini Devi Dasi hopes the retreat becomes an annual event that rotates between regions and becomes a solid fixture among the university programmes, so chapters can share resources and learn from each other.

To follow ongoing outreach, visit the ISKCON South Africa website at iskconza.com and follow the participating BYS chapters: UCT and UP on Facebook, and WITS and UKZN on Instagram.

The Peacock Tree in the retreat

Two devotees from Klerksdorp attended thanks to sponsorship from the Peacock Tree. Support for the retreat also went to BYS, Klerksdorp and Hammanskraal. The split of this month’s spending is in the finance section at the end.

WuSA House

Project lead: Manukanya Devi Dasi, WuSA House temple president and WITS BYS counsellor

WuSA became a busy centre this month. Keshava Swami came straight from his flight to meet the BYS students waiting at WuSA, and opened the floor to their questions.

Harinama Ruci stayed at WuSA for part of their two month visit to South Africa. Kirtan, prasadam, questions and conversation filled the house, while Harinama Ruci carried the holy names out into different parts of the country.

Manukanya Devi Dasi also helped organise the National BYS Retreat. The WITS group arrived late on the Friday because of transport problems, and joined the evening programme at supper time. WuSA devotees were invited to keep chanting together in the online WuSA japa session that continues after the retreat.

WuSA received the largest share of the Peacock Tree's support in September, 37.1 percent of all spending. It covers allowances, general support, and support linked to Harinama Ruci and the retreat.

FESTIVAL

Soweto Ratha-yatra

Soweto Ratha-yatra returned once again, carrying Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra through the streets of Soweto.

Whenever I think of Soweto Ratha-yatra, I cannot help remembering His Holiness Kadamba Kanana Swami and the way he used to say it in that unmistakable Dutch accent: **Showwetho!**

Almost twenty years ago Maharaja pushed for the devotees of Soweto to have their own Ratha-yatra. Sometimes the festival was large, sometimes smaller, and there were years when circumstances interrupted things, but somehow the chariot kept returning.



Soweto Ratha-yatra 2026.



His Holiness Keshava Swami visited Soweto two weeks before the Ratha Yatra.

“To see Jagannath come out in public, and to see so many people who normally never get the opportunity to see Him, is very special.”

Madhava, at the Soweto Ratha-yatra

We are grateful to team ARYA and to the dedicated devotees in Soweto who continue to assist Mahaprabhu Prabhu with the vision of Kadamba Kanana Swami and Srila Prabhupada in Soweto.

Klerksdorp joined in too. Nearly 22 community members travelled to the festival on 26 September and all of them took part in the procession.

A 25 seater bus carried devotees from Hammanskraal and Klerksdorp to the magical Soweto Ratha Yatra.

Klerksdorp

Project lead: Narottama Prabhu

September was a month full of adventure and spiritual enrichment for the growing ISKCON community in Klerksdorp.

Highlights for the month

The National Inner Adventure Retreat, 11 to 13 September. Two devotees from Klerksdorp attended with Keshava Swami and Gauranga Swami. The trip gave them a broader vision of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON in the world and in South Africa. It deepened their appreciation for bhakti yoga and increased their enthusiasm to join temple programmes with more focus. The trip was arranged through Rukmini Devi Dasi in Durban and sponsored by the Kadamba Kanana Swami Foundation. The Klerksdorp devotees are very grateful to everyone involved.

A special guest on 20 September. Keshava Swami visited the Sunday 10:00 service. Young and old felt his presence, and the chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra was so loud and full of energy that neighbours a few houses away said they could hear it.

His class was called "The ABCD of Spiritual Life", about the importance and urgency of taking spiritual life seriously.

- **A** stands for association
- **B** stands for books
- **C** stands for chanting
- **D** stands for diet

Many attendees memorised the ABCD and its meaning. Every Sunday before the reading begins, the community goes through the four letters again, and many people still remember them.

The Soweto Festival of Chariots, 26 September. The festival was beautiful. Nearly 22 community members went and every one of them took part in the procession. They were gifted colourful dresses that made the day more special. The transport for all 22 seats was donated by Virabhadra Prabhu, a disciple of HH Jayadvaita Swami. After seeing the potential of ISKCON Klerksdorp to move the sankirtan movement forward, he pledged to help the project reach its goals and promised to encourage others to get involved.

Growth and active participation

Growth in Klerksdorp is steady. A couple of hundred people may not call themselves devotees of Lord Krishna, but they have memorised the holy names and chant at random times, when they feel down or just need something to pass the time. Many share heartfelt realisations and a more positive outlook since meeting the devotees at the temple.

Challenges on the ground

The main challenge is still finance. Programmes are not adequately funded. The team is thankful to the Kadamba Foundation for continued support, but the lead feels the presentation of Krishna consciousness in Klerksdorp is not yet what it should be. Kitchari (mealie samp) is cooked on both Wednesdays and Sundays to keep costs low, so the Sunday programme cannot honestly be called a love feast.

- The team wants to print pamphlets in English, Setswana and Afrikaans to hand out at programmes, but regular printing costs are out of reach.
- The temple has great potential to spread the sankirtan movement through social media, but it still has no clear billboard saying “Hare Krishna Temple” and “Founder Acharya HDG A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada”.
- Small centres are rarely encouraged by senior leaders when devotees visit the big centres. A bigger temple may need R100 000 to R500 000 a month to run. Klerksdorp has a very small budget, yet great potential to reach Black South Africans, something the big centres have tried to do for years.
- A monthly amount of R25 000 would be more than enough to move forward and reach thousands of local people, mainly African and Coloured communities.

The lead asks that Srila Prabhupada's instruction that each temple be supported for its own purpose be looked at from five points of view: compassion, the location of the temple, its potential to preach and attract new souls, the genuine lack of interest in supporting small temples, and the fading spirit of supporting missionary work among working people.

Coming up

On Sunday 4 October, Klerksdorp celebrates its third year of community service. Plans are in place and invitations have gone out to leaders around South Africa. The community was also invited at the recent Wednesday Morning Community Breakfast. The hope is a packed hall with enthusiastic chanters, prasadam and happy faces.

The team keeps praying for Lord Krishna's mercy to do more service and to please Srila Prabhupada in spreading ISKCON in South Africa and across Africa.

In their own words

“Devotees are doing an incredible service, introducing Krishna consciousness to the people of South Africa. If you can support and help these initiatives to grow, it is so much the heart of the Hare Krishna movement to reach out and share Krishna consciousness.”

His Holiness S.B. Keshava Swami, in a video message from Klerksdorp

“There is a sweetness, innocence and purity in this programme that really touches the heart. Support Klerksdorp.”

Rukmini Devi Dasi, on her first visit to Klerksdorp

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DEVOTEES AT THE NATIONAL
RETREAT

22

DEVOTEES AT THE SOWETO
CHARIOT FESTIVAL

3 years

OF SERVICE, CELEBRATED 4
OCTOBER

Hamanskraal

Project lead: Jaya Nitai Prabhu



At the Hamanskraal programme.

Most activities are going on well. Food For Life continues and so does book distribution. When prasadam is distributed, the team also holds public kirtan, because people are easily drawn to it.

Books are mostly distributed in the city, because the environment there is more favourable.

The current IGP committee is doing a great job. As a result, the team has built a working relationship with the Pretoria temple. Devotees can now stay over in Pretoria while distributing books. In the lead's words this is gradual growth, and a promising one.

Book Bhakti

Devotees from Baltimore, USA, donated some sets of Srimad Bhagavatam. We distributed them to Hamanskraal, Klerksdorp, WuSA and the BYS students.



Handing sets of Srimad Bhagavatam to Narottama Prabhu in Klerksdorp.



Devotees distributing books at market places.

Book Bhakti gifts also came in steadily through September. Thank you to every devotee and well wisher who gave. The full Book Bhakti report for August and September follows.

The Bhagavad-Gita Handbook is launched

August and September were quiet in the field and busy behind the scenes.

Several team members were unavailable or left the project. There was no meaningful presence at malls and markets, and most outreach pillars slowed down. In the same two months, Book Bhakti finished, printed and launched the Essence of the Bhagavad-Gita Handbook.

Edited by His Holiness Jayadvaita Maharaj, the pocket sized handbook was offered to Srila Prabhupada at his Vyasa Puja celebrations on 5 September 2026. It presents the essence of Bhagavad-gita As It Is in a form that can be read in about 15 minutes. At roughly R10 to R15 a copy, it can reach a much wider audience.

5 000

HANDBOOKS PRINTED

805

HANDBOOKS DISTRIBUTED

4 000+

HANDBOOKS STILL IN STOCK

Devotees and community members in ISKCON Durban are already asking for copies, and Book Bhakti is becoming known as the project behind the handbook.

Sponsorship and cash

The project secured R23 500 in sponsorship. Income for the two months was R26 515. The cash balance grew from about R11 371 to a projected R17 395.75, an increase of about R6 025. The handbooks still in stock add to this position and can bring in further income as distribution grows.

Soul Compass

The schools and youth pillar now has a name, Soul Compass. It is the flagship outreach pillar and covers work with schools, learners and youth development. A governance framework has been applied to it. New school outreach was not achieved in these two months, but the identity and framework are clearer. The next step is active school and youth engagement.

Behind the scenes

Governance work continued so that Book Bhakti does not depend on individual enthusiasm alone. The Book Bhakti website remains the digital home of the project. Little new content was added, and no one is currently driving social media.

Challenges

- Team members were unavailable or left, which put pressure on those who remained.
- There was no meaningful mall or market presence, so fewer people met the books directly.
- Apart from the handbook, governance and Soul Compass, the other pillars made limited progress.
- The digital and social media pillar has no dedicated person.

What comes next

The focus is to build momentum around the handbook. That means returning to malls and markets, expanding distribution, re-engaging schools and youth through Soul Compass, rebuilding the team, appointing someone for the digital pillar, growing sponsorship and using the remaining stock. All of this prepares an outreach programme for 2027.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

University of Johannesburg

Wellbeing, mindfulness, personal development and community.

Through 2026 the Bhakti Yoga Society at UJ has kept giving students practical, welcoming programmes on wellbeing, mindfulness, personal development and social connection. Sessions run regularly at the Doornfontein and Auckland Park campuses. An introductory programme was held at the Arts campus, and students from the Soweto campus travel to Doornfontein to take part. Each session draws roughly 60 to 100 students.

Area	2026 activity
Main campuses	Doornfontein and Auckland Park
How often	Every two months
Other campus	One introductory session at the Arts campus
Across campuses	Soweto students travel to Doornfontein
Typical attendance	About 60 to 100 students per session
Year end target	About 200 students
Holiday plans	An off campus year end session is being considered
How students hear	WhatsApp groups, posters and flyers

What a session looks like

Sessions work on body, mind, heart and community together. A typical programme includes:

- Physical yoga or chair yoga for gentle movement and relaxation
- Breathing exercises for calm, focus and self control
- Mindfulness techniques for managing everyday pressure
- Cooking demonstrations
- Talks with questions and open discussion
- Group activities with prizes, to build teamwork
- Mantra meditation
- Lunch together, so students can connect and build community

Who comes

Based on what the team has observed, about 98 percent of students are African and 2 percent are Indian. Students from the Soweto campus travel to Doornfontein to attend, so interest reaches well beyond the campuses that host sessions. Students are welcome regardless of their background or any previous experience of yoga, mindfulness or meditation.

Volunteers

An external volunteer team gave their time and knowledge this year.

Arjuna Das

Shyam Govinda Das

Sri Nityananda Das

Dinesvara Krishna Das

Bhakta Ravin Govind

Rukmini Priya Dasi

Dvarakadisa Das

Bhakta Manoj Dullabh



A BYS student presenting at the University of Johannesburg campus.

Supporting student wellbeing

The programme gives students a place to build practical tools in stress management, mindfulness, relaxation, emotional wellbeing, concentration, positive peer interaction, personal development and community connection. It also lets them step away from academic pressure for a few hours and spend time with their peers in a positive setting.

Year end programme

A larger final session is being planned for about 200 students, with the same mix of wellbeing activities, meditation, interaction and community. The team is also looking at an off campus programme during the year end vacation for students who want to keep taking part outside the academic calendar.

Looking ahead

Interest among students in wellbeing and personal development remains clear. The Society wants to strengthen its cooperation with the University, deliver sessions more consistently and open the programme to students across all UJ campuses.

Its key priorities are:

- Keeping regular sessions going
- Bringing more students from different campuses together
- Improving how sessions are communicated and made accessible
- Developing the year end programme
- Exploring suitable off campus activities in the university holidays

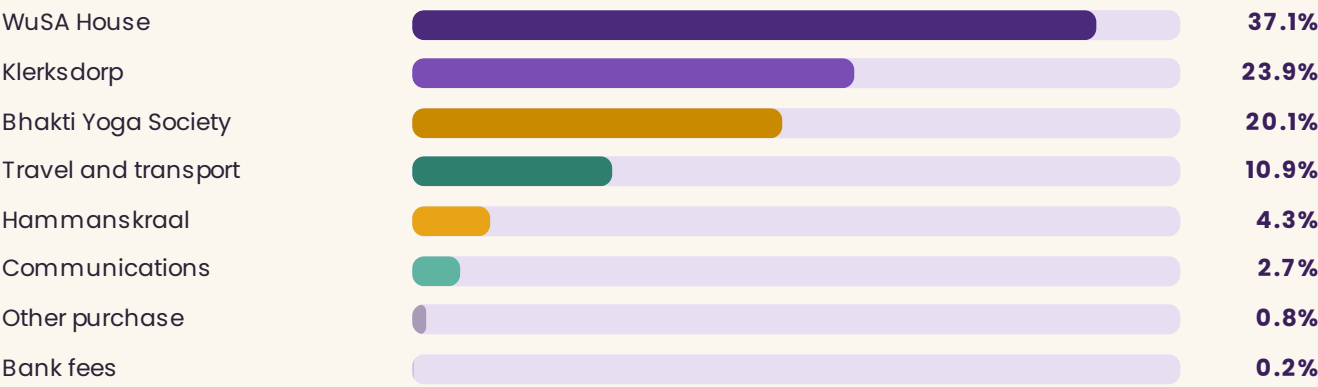
With continued support from the University, student leaders and volunteers, the Society can reach further and be more consistent in the lives of UJ students.

Between 60 and 100 students at individual sessions, across several UJ campuses, shows the value students place on these programmes. The Society looks forward to building on this as 2026 closes and the next academic year begins.

Finance for September 2026

Every project lead is doing a lot with very little. This month's retreat sponsorships and travel took a large share of what we spent.

How we spent it, by project



WuSA House includes allowances, general support and support linked to Harinama Ruci and the retreat. Klerksdorp, Hammanskraal and BYS include their share of national retreat support. Travel and transport covers flights and Soweto transport. Communications is mobile data.

THANK YOU

Every gift is a seed

Because of you, two students from Klerksdorp sat in a circle on a KwaZulu-Natal beach in September. Because of you, twenty two people marched in a chariot procession in Soweto. Because of you, students at UJ and WITS found a quiet hour in a hard semester.

We are grateful to every donor, well wisher and volunteer, and to Kadamba Kanana Swami, whose example keeps this work going.

Please donate

Give through the Kadamba Foundation website, or pay directly into the Peacock Tree NPC FNB account.

The Peacock Tree NPC

Registration No. 2022/837482/08

Banking details and website address go [here](#).

Hare Krishna. Thank you for walking with us.