

RESEARCH WORKSHOP  
SEMINAR SERIES 2025

# A multidisciplinary approach to the study of Urban Crisis: A focus on the City of Johannesburg

**20  
MARCH**

**Time:** 1-3pm

**Venue:** PARI OFFICES

Register to attend in person

AND ONLINE

<https://rebrand.ly/xf8uvz6>

## Urban Water Scarcity and Municipal Finance: A Case Study of Johannesburg

by KIRSTEN PEARSON

Residents and businesses in Johannesburg are faced with inadequate water supply. South Africa's municipal revenue model relies largely on the resale of water and electricity to generate revenue to fund municipal operations. However, municipalities have discretionary power to prioritise spending, often leading to inadequate investment in infrastructure maintenance. This study discusses the institutional and fiscal dimensions of the water crisis in Johannesburg, exploring how persistent neglect of infrastructure maintenance has contributed to avoidable water losses. By examining the interplay of governance arrangements and budget dynamics, it describes some root causes of the ongoing water challenges.

**KIRSTEN PEARSON** is a development practitioner, researcher and activist. She works as a Climate Finance Researcher at the South African Institute of International Affairs. Kirsten holds a masters in Development Studies from the University of Cape Town and is the co-author of the best-selling book, 'Nuclear'.

### DISCUSSANT

**FERRIAL ADAM** is a water and climate justice activist