

**PARI**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## CONTENT COMPILATION

PARI Communications | communications@pari.org.za

## DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Quba Design and Motion | info@quba.co.za

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Cover: Envato

Bram Lammers: pp. 6/7; 12/13; 14/15; 18; 20; 24; 26; 28; 30/31; back cover; staff photographs



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## SITHEMBILE MBETE

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year has been one of considerable transformation for PARI's internal and external environment. I joined PARI as Executive Director in December 2024 at a time of great internal reorganisation and external volatility. During this fiscal year, PARI experienced a significant leadership transition. Our previous Executive Director, Mbongiseni Buthelezi, was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in July 2024. Our previous Co-Director and Head of Programmes, Lindiwe Ndlela left PARI in January 2025 to pursue new opportunities.

These leadership changes presented both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, the departure of an experienced executive required internal realignment; on the other hand, it prompted a renewed emphasis on institutional resilience, leadership development, and capacity-building to continue PARI's mission with clarity of purpose and continuity. I'm delighted to have joined PARI at such an exciting time in global and domestic politics and to be able to position PARI to take its place at the forefront of shaping policy discourses and conducting research that enables policymakers and the public to make sense of the moment.

2024 was an election year in South Africa which resulted in the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). This has heightened demand for independent,

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evidence-based research offering PARI both opportunities for impact and added responsibility. The new governance structure has created opportunities for PARI to impact policy through participation in various reform initiatives, including the National Energy Crisis Committee (NECCOM), supporting the development of regulations for the Public Service Commission's (PSC) expanded mandate, and extending our work in local government reform.

Internationally, changes in political leadership in the United States caused a profound disruption to the global political economy causing huge upheaval in civil society funding. Fortunately, PARI hasn't been affected by funding cuts. However, we've been engaging with donor and civil society partners to prepare ourselves for the disruption in our operating environment. Understanding and mitigating risks is essential to ensure PARI's sustainability in these turbulent times.

We continued with the implementation of our PARI 3.0 Strategy making notable progress in our mission of producing rigorous social-science research, shaping public discourse, and supporting institutional reform.

The Just Transition programme made significant gains in advancing debate and policy thinking around decarbonisation, climate resilience and equitable access to energy, water and food. In particular, PARI published a report titled Affordability of Basic Services for South African Households, which underscores the urgent need for policy responses to alleviate household cost burdens and advance social justice in basic-services provisioning. The Just Transition programme's work on decarbonisation and social equity positioned PARI as a timely and credible voice in national and sub-national policy debates. Our COMPACT programme released a comprehensive consolidated technical findings report based on two years of intensive research in 12 partner municipalities on the institutional environment and limitations around effective public participation, including the functioning of ward committees. This

report has provided a valuable foundation for engagement with policymakers in local government as we head towards the 2026 local government elections.

The GNU has not ushered in a major push for a depoliticised administration. However, the portfolio committees in Parliament are more active now than under the last few parliaments, and have focused more advocacy attention there, especially to the portfolio committee on public service and administration. A highlight of the year was developing a report for the Speaker of Parliament, Thoko Didiza, to assist her with tracking the implementation of the Zondo Commission's recommendations by the state. We held another successful conference on the State Capture Commission Zondo Commission Conference that was covered extensively in print and broadcast media.

Convening power is one of the strengths we've developed this year, hosting events and meetings that bring together civil society, policymakers, and the public to engage with a variety of issues. Our Urban Crisis Seminar Series, in collaboration with the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO), Society Work and Politics Institute (SWOP), and Johannesburg Crisis: Concerned Academics at Wits University became a space for rich and productive discussions among academics, CSOs and local government officials to discuss Joburg's governance crisis.

As always, we've maintained our engagement with the academic community to ensure both academic rigour and policy relevance in our work. We partnered with the Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) Southern Africa in the design

and delivery of a course on gender in land governance to be taught throughout the continent.

PARI's diversified programme portfolio and established institutional partnerships have allowed it to remain relevant and responsive under challenging operating conditions. This year has reinforced the continued relevance of PARI's founding mission: to conduct original social-science research into institutional constraints, state-society relations, and policy reform; and to leverage that research to inform public debate, advocacy, and institutional change.

Despite leadership turnover, PARI has maintained momentum across its core programmes. The growing public concern around corruption, procurement governance, energy access, and municipal accountability offers a clear mandate for PARI's continued work.

Looking ahead, priorities for the coming year include completing the recruitment of senior staff to strengthen operational stability, scaling up outreach particularly in municipalities and under-served communities, and deepening our engagement with civil society, government, and academic partners to shape policy discussions and reforms in an increasingly turbulent environment.

I extend my gratitude to PARI's researchers, support staff, partners, funders, and Board for their dedication and support as I've transitioned into the role and their continued commitment to excellence in their work. Their efforts have allowed PARI to maintain its voice, relevance and impact in this exciting (and daunting) time of change. ■

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# 2024

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

**2024 was a year of internal renewal, ongoing collaborations and expanded public engagement, with a particular focus on public policy in the different programme areas. In both its institutional life and its research focus, the organisation reaffirmed its role as an institute working with policymakers, implementers, civil society, academia, the media and communities towards stronger public institutions and better governance in South Africa.**

The year produced notable highlights across the programmes. The Just Transition programme gained momentum with two major research reports, policy briefs and animations around ensuring that the South African just transition includes equitable access to basic services and viable livelihoods across society. The programme also translated its book publication, *Hungry for Electricity* (PARI, 2022) into French for wider reach, particularly in francophone Africa. The Land Governance programme released a series of policy briefs on land tenure in collaboration with the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) and a literature review considering the role of traditional authorities. COMPACT, in its penultimate year, developed a citizen-based monitoring tool, published in three

South African languages, and produced two new factsheets about the programme. The State Reform programme wrapped up its work on the Zondo Commission recommendations, in partnership with the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution (CASAC), with a mini-conference/workshop considering next steps. The programme made numerous public submissions on draft legislation during the year, and developed a working paper on recruitment in the public administration. The Academic Engagement programme continued the Joburg Urban Crisis Series in collaboration with the Society Work and Politics institute (SWOP), the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) and the Joburg Crisis: Concerned Academics. The Local Government programme went into transition with new Programme Lead, Jugal Mahabir, finding overlaps and supportive roles with the State Reform, Just Transition and COMPACT programmes.

In December 2024, PARI welcomed a new Executive Director following an inclusive and participatory selection process. Staff were invited directly by the Board of Directors to engage in shaping the institute's leadership transition, reflecting the organisation's broader commitment to a healthy organisational environment, transparency and accountability. ■

# SHAPING CHANGE

**MEDIA AND EVENTS**



## REPORTS

Chilenga-Butao, T. and W. Holland (2024) 'Transitions: The role of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy in South Africa's just energy transition'. A PARI report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

CSWG (2024) 'A Collective Civil Society Response to the Zondo Commission and the State Capture Report'. A CSWG Report. March 2024. Civil Society Working Group on State Capture.

Ledger, T. (2024) 'The Role of the State in a Successful Just Transition: Defining the Transition Effective State'. A PARI report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Ledger, T. (2024) 'Empty Promises: The struggle for equitable access to water in South Africa'. A PARI report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) 'Dialogue Series on the Capacity of the State'. A PARI Report for the Association of former Directors-General. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) 'Workshop Report: What Now Since the State Capture Commission?' A PARI/CASAC Report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) 'Public Participation and Municipal Planning in South Africa: A consolidated technical findings report on action research at 12 local municipalities'. A COMPACT Report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.



## JOURNAL ARTICLES

Chigbu, U.E., G. Paradza, R.V. Nghitevelekwa, and M. Klaus (2024). '[Editorial: Current research and opinion on land governance for societal development in and on the global South](#)'. Land Use Policy 141(1): 107112.

Chigbu, U.E., G. Paradza, R.V. Nghitevelekwa and M. Klaus (eds) (2022–24) '[Current research and opinion on land governance for societal development in and on the global South](#)'. Land Use Policy Special Issue.

## BOOKS

Ledger, T. and M. Rampedi (2024) *Soif d'Électricité*. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

## WORKING PAPERS

Pearson, J. (2024) '[Reflections on the Role of Traditional Authorities in Land Governance in 21st Century South Africa](#)'. Working Paper No. 1. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Brunette, R. (2024) '[Checking Political Discretion in Recruitment to South Africa's Public Administration](#)'. Working Paper No. 2. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

## POLICY BRIEFS

Chakwizira, J. and F. Tshivhase (2024) '[Review of Traditional Authority Customary Land Management Practices in Limpopo Province of South Africa](#)'. Policy Brief. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Chilenga-Butao, T. (2024) '[Slowing down a moving train: the DMRE's response to South Africa's just energy transition](#)'. Policy Brief. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Ledger, T. (2024) '[Rapid Electricity Supply Diversification in Municipalities is the Key to Economic Recovery, Municipal Financial Sustainability and an Early End to Load Shedding](#)'. Policy Brief. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Wicomb, W. (2024) '[What are the challenges of incorporating the diverse land rights of the majority of South Africans into the existing formal land registration system?](#)'. LRC/PARI Policy Brief 1/3. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Wicomb, W. (2025) '[Enhancing Security of Tenure Through Land Administration](#)'. LRC/PARI Policy Brief 2/3. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

Wicomb, W. (2025) '[Proposals to Policymakers to Transform Land Administration and Secure Tenure for Unregistered Land Rights in South Africa](#)'. LRC/PARI Policy Brief 3/3. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

## STATEMENTS/ SUBMISSIONS

'[Public Procurement Bill 2023: Submission of Public Comment to the National Council of Provinces](#)', Public Affairs Research Institute, 22 February 2024.

'[Submission on the Public Procurement Bill \(B18B-2023\)](#)', Joint Strategic Resource (JSR), 22 February 2024.

'[Statement on the National Assembly's passing of the Public Service Amendment Bill](#)', Public Affairs Research Institute, 29 February 2024.

'[Local Government Municipal Structures Amendment Bill \("Coalitions Bill"\) 2024: Submission of Public Comment to the Department of Cooperative Governance](#)', Public Affairs Research Institute, 30 July 2024.

'[Public Comment on the Public Service Commission Bill](#)', Public Affairs Research Institute and The Ethics Institute, 11 November 2024.

'[Public Comment: Draft Public Administration Management Regulations for the Central Register \(Gazette No. 51963\)](#)', Public Affairs Research Institute, 23 February 2025.

## RESOURCES

COMPACT (2025) '[LG Citizen Monitoring Tool | Monitor's Handbook](#)'. London, U.K.: Integrity Action.

COMPACT (2025) '[LG-Instrument Vir Burgermonitors | Monitorshandleiding](#)'. London, U.K.: Integrity Action.

COMPACT (2025) '[Isixhobobo Sokuhlola Se-LG | Incwadi Yomhloli](#)'. London, U.K.: Integrity Action.

Pillay, D. (2024) '[Zondo Commission Recommendations Update: Where do we stand in 2024?](#)' Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) '[Factsheet #3: Citizen Based Monitoring](#)'. Informational resource. COMPACT.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) '[Factsheet #5: Citizen Engagement Workshops](#)'. Informational resource. COMPACT.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) '[Renewable Energy will Fix our Economy Now](#)'. PARI Animation video. Just Transition programme.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2024) '[How to Build a Transition Effective State](#)'. PARI Animation video. Just Transition programme.

# EVENTS

## 10 APRIL 2024 | BOOK LAUNCH

**State-Society Relations Around the World Through the Lens of the Covid-19 Pandemic: Rapid Test.** The collection examines state–society relations during the Covid-19 pandemic, with editors Sarah Meny-Gibert and Federica Duca, contributing author Martin Bekker, and discussant Salimah Valiani. University of Johannesburg.

## 12 SEPTEMBER 2024 | REPORT LAUNCH

**Transitions: The Role of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy in South Africa's just energy transition.** A discussion with Lebogang Mulaisi, Victor Munnik and co-author Thokozani Chilenga-Butao. Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS).

## 12 FEBRUARY 2025 | SALGA RESEARCH WEBINAR

**Institutional Professionalism in Local Government.** In collaboration with PARI and University of Pretoria. Exploring what it means to professionalise the public administration in local government. PARI's State Reform programme was supporting SALGA's efforts to build a community of practitioners working on this topic.



# URBAN CRISIS SEMINAR SERIES

## A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of Urban Crisis: A focus on the City of Johannesburg. Research Workshop Seminar Series 2024.

### 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

**'The Failure of a Coalition Across Difference: A case study of the Metropolitan City of Johannesburg'** and **'The Viability of Legal Interventions in Addressing Municipal Dysfunction and an Exploration of the Burgeoning Judicial Role: A focus on the City of Johannesburg'**. With presenters Moeketsi Koahela and Claire Franklyn, and discussant Sarah-Meny Gibert. Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

### 31 OCTOBER 2024

**'State of Local Government in Gauteng'**. Presented by Rashid Seedat, with discussants Ishmael Mkhabela and Dale T. McKinley. Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

### 14 NOVEMBER 2024

**'Exploiting the Infrastructural Labour of Logistics: Circulation and the reproduction of racialised capitalism in Gauteng, South Africa'**. With presenter Bridget Kenny and discussant Sarah Nuttall. Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).



# WHAT NOW SINCE THE STATE CAPTURE COMMISSION?

**15 NOVEMBER 2024 | PARI/CASAC WORKSHOP**

Deliberation and feedback on the priority issues from the Zondo Commission that civil society needs to watch.

In September 2022, PARI and CASAC hosted a two-day conference to assess the Zondo Commission's findings and recommendations, and in 2023, a follow-up conference examined the Executive, Parliament and the corporate sector's responses to the Commission's findings. Attended primarily by civil society representatives, and including participants from academia, government and media, the conference generated lively debate and some strong recommendations to support the fight against state capture. In 2024, we proposed a short, focused discussion on action.

Where are we now? What should the Government of National Unity and the 7th Parliament do to ensure there is progress on addressing state capture by public and private sector actors?



## WHAT NOW SINCE THE STATE CAPTURE COMMISSION?

A discussion on the priority issues from the Zondo Commission that civil society needs to watch.



**SAVE THE DATE**  
15 November 2024  
8.30 to 13.00

**REGISTER NOW**



## BROADCAST

Power FM, 11 November 2024. Power Talk's Lerato Mbele was in conversation with PARI's Local Government Lead Jugal Mahabir, joined by Minister of CoGTA Velenkosini Hlabisa and Lerato Phasha, Head of Municipal Finances at SALGA.

## OP EDS

Ledger, T. (2024) 'Rapid municipal energy supply diversification will light way to a much brighter economy'. *Daily Maverick*, 29 April 2024.

Ledger, T. (2024) 'Johannesburg's electricity tariff trap for the poor'. *News24*, 7 May 2024.

Ledger, T. (2024) 'Empty Promises: The Struggle for Equitable Access to Water'. *News24*, 21 November 2024.

Naidoo, L. and S. Meny-Gibert (2024) 'The focus shift we need to fight corruption'. *Sunday Times*, 24 November 2024.

Ledger, T. (2025) 'South Africa has failed to deliver access to enough water for millions – a new approach is needed'. *The Conversation Africa*, 18 February 2025.



The struggles that poor households face in paying for even small amounts of electricity are well-documented: in many households, electricity competes with food for a share of limited income, and the main reason why child-grant recipients borrow money is to pay for electricity.

Tracy Ledger,  
Johannesburg's electricity  
tariff trap for the poor

# PROGRAMMES

PARI's research underlines the importance of institutional design and performance to build effective and democratic state institutions, for more equitable policies to reduce poverty and inequality. We collaborate with civil society organisations, think tanks, state institutions and academic institutions, to:

- Produce **new and original research** into public institutions, state formation, state-society relations and public policy;
- Realise **advocacy campaigns to achieve state reform**, focusing on the various programme areas, strategic collaborations and cooperation with the state;
- Maintain **an academic profile** through university affiliations and teaching programmes, to foster a conducive intellectual environment within the organisation, and contribute to the study fields of state governance and state-society relations
- Shape **public opinion** in relevant interest groups through targeted communications;
- Maintain a **repository of research** accessible to the public.



# STATE REFORM

The State Reform Programme (SRP) aims to reduce the influence of corruption on the public administration and to develop a stable, developmentally directed, impartial public administration. Over the last few years, the programme has focused on civil service reform related to appointments of senior officials, public procurement reform and enhancing oversight of institutions.



The programme advocates for reforms through research and its dissemination, submissions on legislation, participation in government task teams and other forums, and works with civil society partners to build momentum for change.



Recent successes in the SRP include the introduction of transparency clauses in the new Public Procurement Act. This is partly a result of the pressure civil society created in the public participation process in Parliament last year. While we have major concerns that the Act does not provide a clear framework for enhanced public procurement, we see these transparency provisions as a platform for the progressive realisation of more 'open government'.

PARI is working with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to support implementation of the Professionalisation Framework, which has important proposals for reforming senior appointment processes. In October we partnered with the PSC, United National Development Programme and the World Bank on a conference to support the implementation of the Framework, and the SRP has provided advice to Commissioners on the new PSC Bill – currently before Parliament. We are also part of a 'social compact' for professionalising the local government sphere and recently hosted a webinar on this topic with SALGA. The SRP is engaging with the Auditor-General about monitoring the implementation of the Professionalisation Framework.

Via our new research on coalition government in Gauteng, we are building the empirical base for engaging in policy advocacy in two related areas: around the regulation and delineation of the political-administrative interface, and around the regulation of coalition government. While this research is in its early stages, we have already been approached directly by the

Department of Cooperative Governance to provide input on amendments to legislation in this space (including on the 'Coalition Bill'). We are now using this research to feed into the Presidential Working Group on Johannesburg: PARI has been invited by the Presidency to participate in this initiative.

In November last year, we held our third annual event on the Zondo Commission, following two very successful conferences in 2022 and 2023. These events received excellent coverage in the media, and have helped keep the Commission's work and recommendations alive in the public imagination. On the basis of our work in this area, we were approached, with CASAC, by the new Speaker of Parliament to develop a report on the Commission, to assist Parliament with tracking the implementation of these recommendations by the state. Finally, a new book project on the Zondo Commission is underway, following our successful launch of an edited collection titled *State Capture in South Africa* (Wits University Press, 2023).

We are also exploring comparative research on state capture in Africa more broadly: PARI and scholars from Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia are meeting in May 2025 to map out a future research project.

Last, the SRP still acts as a secretariat to the Association of former Directors-General (AfDG), who are committed to sharing their experience and skills to support the professionalisation agenda and build the state's capabilities. ■



# JUST TRANSITION

Over this period, we extended our work supporting South Africa's energy transition and added two new research areas – how to achieve social justice and climate resilience in the water and food systems.



Our overarching goal is to contribute to the successful implementation of South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership Investment Plan (JETP IP).

## JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

Our work around the just energy transition (JET) focused on the following:

**Supporting the energy transition at a sub-national level:** We are supporting the work of NECOM Workstream 5, which is developing a roadmap for reform of South Africa's electricity distribution industry (EDI). EDI reform is critical to a successful energy transition, to delivering the grid required to facilitate a wider range of energy sources. EDI reform is also essential to improving the reliability of electricity supply and achieving a 100% grid access rate.

In addition, we are developing a municipal JET portal, which will illustrate a range of electricity distribution and renewable energy data, presented per municipality, in an interactive map format. The aim of this portal is to provide municipalities with more information around the potential of diversifying their energy mix and to support policymaking around EDI reform.

**Addressing energy poverty:** over the past three years we have been working to achieve both a better implementation of the state's Free Basic Electricity (FBE) policy (which currently only benefits approximately 25% of the intended beneficiaries) and an increase in the FBE allocation from the current 50 kWh/household/month. Progress in this area has been slow, but some notable achievements were recorded in the year: COGTA is working on a new national indigent register policy that will increase the number of

beneficiary households. There is now general agreement among policymakers that the current allowance is too low, although fiscal constraints limit the potential increase.

**Identifying new models of participatory policy and programme development** under the JET to improve policy design and increase community support.

**Research to support the electrification of the national minibus tax fleet:** we have completed the first phase of this work, which will continue into 2025.

## WATER AND FOOD TRANSITIONS

Our work around the water and food transitions commenced in the second half of the year and was facilitated by a new donor – the ClimateWorks Just Transition Fund. Our initial focus in this regard has been on water systems; specifically, how to achieve both climate resilience and social justice in the provision of water. Our initial report (Empty Promises) investigated in detail how the constitutional right to access to water is actually being delivered. The current programme focus is on (i) fresh water use by coal-fired power stations and coal mines and (ii) the water crisis in Gauteng.

We participated in the annual meeting of the International Network of Energy Transition Think Tanks (INETTT) in Warsaw in September 2024, where we shared our research and our advocacy strategies with other organisations from around the world. ■



# COMPACT

Over the past year, COMPACT has deepened its work to enhance community participation in planning and oversight with 12 partner local municipalities. Feedback from both phases of the action research was provided to all 12 municipalities in the form of research reports and presentations. In November 2024, COMPACT published a consolidated technical findings report, which synthesises the research findings and recommendations across the 12 municipalities. The report outlines the institutional environment and limitations around effective public participation, including the functioning of ward committees. The report also investigates the alignment of the municipality’s integrated development plan (IDP), and internal planning and performance management processes. Policy briefs are currently being developed from this research.

## ... Enhancing participation of local communities in integrated development planning processes and improving planning and oversight of service delivery in municipalities.

In 2024, the programme shifted to the development and piloting of tools and resources for municipalities and communities, in the form of the COMPACT Toolbox. The primary objective of the toolbox is to provide practical, actionable and easily accessible resources that municipalities can use to improve their planning and participation efforts. It is envisaged as a curated collection of tools, resources, guidelines, templates, checklists, good practices etc., designed to support and enhance the capabilities of different stakeholders at the local level (including political office-bearers, senior managers, municipal officials, ward councillors, ward committee members, community members and civil society representatives).

In July 2024, a toolbox development workshop was held with different stakeholders from across government and civil society to draw on the action research and collectively reflect on tools and resources for the Toolbox. Eleven tools are being considered, where some are in development stages and others are being piloted. The Citizen Based Monitoring (CBM) tool being piloted in Oudtshoorn and Kouga local municipalities was the first tool to be developed, and the monitoring of IDP infrastructure projects at the two pilot sites is ongoing. The approach has been

designed to engage community residents in assessing IDP projects, with a particular focus on women and youth. Ward committee members have been selected to act as monitors, as representatives from their community. Monitors’ handbooks have been developed in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

COMPACT employed the services of a professional service provider to develop a ‘local government collaboration model’ that can be piloted and implemented with partner municipalities. The collaboration model aims to bring together different stakeholders – including municipal officials, councillors, ward committee members, civil society organisations and community members – to find solutions to challenges and work together on improving service delivery and development. The model is being piloted in Blue Crane Route and Newcastle local municipalities.

Another developmental tool, the COMPACT Community Participation Index, will be piloted with two municipalities, to contribute to measuring and monitoring community participation in planning in municipalities. Other tools being developed include: a local government guide, civic education materials, IDP participation resources and tools to strengthen ward committees. ■

# ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT



The Academic Engagement programme in 2024 has focused on strengthening and fostering relationships with our academic partners, the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Witwatersrand.

We have provided support to the Organisational and Institutional Studies programme students in finalising their theses and we currently have two PhD students, one master's student and one honour's student still registered. Their work is tightly linked to PARI programmatic areas, including local participation and local government finance.

Collaboration with other Wits University institutions culminated in the Urban Crisis Seminar Series, launched in September 2024 in collaboration with the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO), the Society Work and Politics Institute (SWOP) and the Joburg Crisis: Concerned Academics. The series provides a space for academics, civil society organisations and local government officials to discuss relevant topics of concern in the City of Johannesburg, ranging from water, electricity and housing, to accountability and coalition government.

The programme also worked to keep the academic life at PARI alive through weekly writing sessions and two writing retreats where researchers could focus on a piece of writing and be guided by a mentor. Internal academic thought at PARI was directed around the theme of public participation, a concept that we unpacked in our internal seminars, where each research programme presented their work in relation to public participation and with the close reading of *Making Bureaucracy Work: Norms, Education and Public Service Delivery in Rural India* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Through the programme, PARI strengthened and institutionalised the internship programme, providing more structure and support to the interns and junior researchers.

Academic Engagement also looked at spatial inequality and urban governance as additional themes. This was done in collaboration with the Groupement de Recherche International-Sud, titled 'Digital Technologies and the Management of Urban Services in Southern Cities' (NumSud). The collaboration with the NumSud project manifested in a workshop last year in October in Paris.

Further engagement with academia and international projects was the participation in a workshop in Nairobi in November 2024, where work on digital and splintering governance was presented.

Two research articles have been published, one is a review of research into smart cities in SADC ('A systematic review of smart city governance in the Southern African Development Community', *Nature Cities*) and one on the Smart City of Lanseria in Johannesburg ('La Smart City di Lanseria a Johannesburg: una nuova strategia democratica?', *Afriche e Orientali*). ■

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2024/25 was a year of transition for the Local Government programme at PARI. During the year, the programme continued its supporting role to the other programmes, particularly the Just Transition programme, the State Reform programme and COMPACT. This pertained particularly to the areas of overlap across other PARI programmes around issues of local government.

The Local Government programme contributed to PARI's official response to the call for public comments on the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Bill, in terms of amendments pertaining to coalition governments. The programme also coordinated PARI's input into the first phase of the review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, led by the Department of Cooperative Governance. In its submission, PARI emphasised key areas of improvements and amendments to the 1998 White Paper, including reviewing the revenue assumptions, explicitly considering aspects of affordability of services and the consideration of new developments in contemporary society, such as climate change and the fourth industrial revolution, into the review process.

The Local Government programme, in collaboration with COMPACT, played an important role in supporting the National Treasury in developing a webinar to better expose ordinary citizens, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations to its quarterly municipal financial publications, as per Section 71 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). This initiative supports the South African government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a global initiative dedicated to fostering transparency, accountability, public participation and innovation in governance. PARI played an important role in developing the content for the webinar, particularly in translating complex financial terminology into easily understandable information to educate and empower local citizens and communities to better engage with their municipalities and to improve public oversight over local government.

In previous years, the PARI's Local Government programme undertook research that highlighted concerns regarding the long-term buoyancy and revenue potential of local government revenue sources. This manifested in a recommendation to review the revenue assumptions in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, which informs the basis of the current local government fiscal framework. During the 24/25 year, the programme focused its research approach to relatively more quantitative methods to complement the qualitative analysis of previous years. As such, the programme is building in a more quantitative aspect to its work, with the exploration of financial and statistical methods of quantifying the revenue potential of local government revenue sources to explicitly ascertain whether local government is sufficiently funded to fulfil its service delivery responsibilities. Research this year focused on property tax revenues, with the exploration of new and innovative methods of estimating the potential of municipal property tax bases. The programme intends to build on this research in the short to medium term and to contribute to the current review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government and the local government fiscal framework. ■

We have engaged extensively with government stakeholders and decision-makers on local government professionalisation, participating in SALGA's efforts to develop a Professionalisation Framework for local government.





# LAND GOVERNANCE

The Land Governance programme continued in the work to support people with vulnerable land rights to secure their land tenure. This is through providing capacity to policymakers, civil society organisations and communities by generating empirical evidence, contributing to debates, policy engagement, capacity development and generating information to support advocacy and lobbying work. The team continued the efforts in the 2024/25 calendar year saw the programme participating in various land issues in South Africa.

The Land Governance Programme continues to contribute to the generation of empirical evidence to inform lobbying, advocacy and policymaking in South Africa.



The team attended the [MACUA and MAWUA summit](#) from the 6–8 February. The summit was held by mining-affected communities to mobilise those communities around issues of mining governance and beneficiation in South Africa. The Programme Lead, Gaynor Paradza, was a panellist in the Department of Justice’s national conference on ‘The Right to Land Ownership in the Context of Section 25 of the Constitution : Assessment of Progress in Land Restitution and Security of Tenure’ held in Johannesburg. The Land Governance Lead also attended a report launch in May 2024 in Cape Town on the release of municipal land for affordable housing, documenting the experiences of Cape Town, eThekweni, Johannesburg and Tshwane.

During the year, the Land Governance programme partnered with Columbia Centre on Sustainable Investment, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to produce guidelines to the municipality on how they can unlock land for the just transition. The work, which uses the case studies of Mpumalanga province, Nkangala District Municipality and Steve Tshwete Local Municipality to highlight the importance of land and local government in just transition, is still underway. The team conducted more than thirty interviews with municipal and non-municipal stakeholders at various levels in South Africa and participated in SALGA Provincial Working Groups and National SALGA working groups as part of the project to raise awareness about the importance of land and the role of local government in developing the guidelines. These include the Nkangala District Municipality Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

Workshop that focused on assessing the district’s climate risks and vulnerability through a detailed evaluation of vulnerability indicators. The team also participated in roundtable events hosted by ICLEI Africa to unpack the municipal opportunity for implementing South Africa’s just transition. The Programme Lead also participated in the launch of a report by the Development Action Group (DAG) with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO): ‘[Releasing Municipal Land for Affordable Housing – Documenting the Experiences of Cape Town, eThekweni, Johannesburg, and Tshwane](#)’. The guidelines will be validated and launched in 2025.

In December 2024, Dr Paradza participated in stakeholder engagement on the powers of the South African Human Rights Commission, to assist the Commission in advancing the goals of the engagement. In February 2025, the Land Governance participated in SALGA spatial transformation knowledge exchange and attended District Rural Development Planning workshop, and presented ongoing work in the programme, to support municipalities and traditional leaders to unlock land for South Africa’s just transition.

The Land Governance Programme has continued to contribute to the generation of empirical evidence to inform lobbying, advocacy and policymaking in South Africa. This included PARI partnering with the Legal Resources Centre to produce a series of three policy briefs, highlighting the unregistered land rights and proposes policy approaches to secure land rights for those with unregistered land rights in the country.

# LAND GOVERNANCE

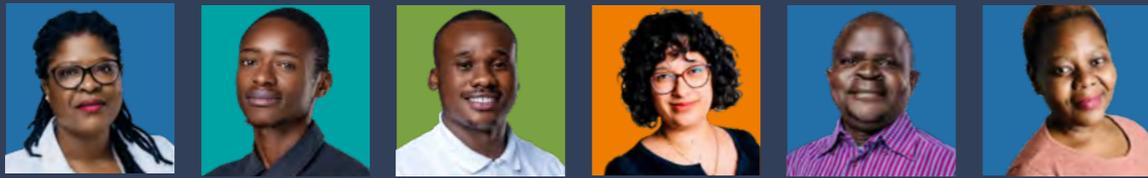
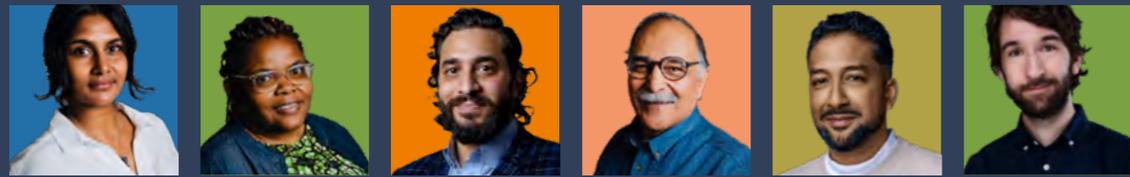
The Land Governance programme continues to support SALGA's work to improve land administration in South Africa by working on the Traditional Authority–Municipal interface.

The programme commissioned and launched research with the University of Venda. A policy brief entitled 'Review of Traditional Authority Customary Land Management Practices in Limpopo Province' of South Africa was produced, and the research findings were the basis for a webinar that drew wide interest from policymakers. A working paper, 'Reflections on the Role of Traditional Authorities in Land Governance in 21st Century South Africa' was also produced from this webinar.

In terms of training, the Land Governance Lead delivered a module to the 2nd Cohort of the Youth Initiative for Land in Africa's online training course. Dr Paradza also delivered a course on Gender in Land Governance to the East African Land Network (EALAN) members in Tanzania in July 2024. The programme also presented a paper at the EALAN Conference in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Dr Paradza reviewed a book manuscript of the book by Davidson Muchadenyika entitled *The Making of An African City: How Harare Grew Over Centuries* (Combined Harare Residents Association, 2025).

PARI continues to be a member of the Node of Excellence in Land Governance Southern Africa (NELGA). The Land Governance programme attended the Sub-regional NELGA sustainability and ALUMNI workshop of Southern Africa in Harare from 29–31 October 2024. Dr Paradza also attended the NELGA Southern Africa Expert Group Meeting in Mauritius from 2–4 December 2024. PARI was admitted as a member of LandNNES – a consultative civil society platform convening members to redress inequality and promote people-centred land governance in South Africa. ■





# STAFF 2025

## EXECUTIVE

Sithembile Mbetse: Executive Director  
Nhongera Nemaramba: Head of Finance  
Lelethu Mazomba: Head of Administration  
Joan Cameron: Human Resources Manager

## OPERATIONS

Pamela Ndlovu: Programmes Administrator  
Refiloe Ramaisa: Organisational Administrator  
Thabiso Parirenyatwa: Project Coordinator  
Sindy Moyo: Housekeeper  
Enoch Nkatha: Groundsman

## COMMUNICATIONS

Vishanthi Arumugam: Head of Communications

## PROGRAMME LEADS

Federica Duca: Academic Engagement  
Gaynor Paradza: Land Governance  
Girish Daya: COMPACT  
Jugal Mahabir: Local Government  
Sarah Meny-Gibert: State Reform  
Tracy Ledger: Just Transition

## RESEARCHERS AND ASSOCIATES

Daniel Sher: Researcher  
Mahlatse Rampedi: Researcher  
Nonhlanhla Mathibela: Researcher  
Waseem Holland: Researcher  
Kate Tissington: Senior Researcher  
Jabu Hlatshwayo: Researcher  
Ntokozo Ndhlovu: Researcher  
Murial Kwena: Intern  
Zain Mayet: Intern  
Peter Vale: Research Mentor  
Joel Pearson: Research Associate  
Ryan Brunette: Research Associate  
Marcus Walton: Research Associate  
Devi Pillay: Research Associate  
Emma Monama: Research Associate  
Thokozani Chilenga-Butao: Research Associate  
Jonathan Klaaren: Research Associate  
Crispian Olver: Research Associate

# PARI TEAM

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Advocate Lerato Phasha**

Co-Chair: Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, Private Practice  
Victoria Mxenge Group of Advocates

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Co-Chair: Head of Education Rights Programme & Advice Office Manager at  
Section27, Admitted Attorney of the High Court of South Africa

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of the South African Reserve Bank

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Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand

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International Studies, Watson Institute, Brown University

## **Ms Gillian Addison**

Retired former Deputy Director of groundWork

## **Dr Sithembile Mbetse**

Executive Director of Public Affairs Research Institute

# FUNDERS

Africa Climate Foundation

Agora Energiewende

ClimateWorks Just Transition Fund

Constitutionalism Fund

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Elma South Africa Foundation

European Union (EU)

Ford Foundation

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

Lewis Foundation

Millennium Trust

Open Society Foundations (OSF South Africa)

Open Society in West Africa (OSIWA)

Raith Foundation

Social Justice Initiative (SJI)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Wits Commercial Enterprise

Yellowwoods Social Investments

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2025

PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH INSTITUTE NPC  
REGISTRATION NUMBER 2010/009156/08

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2025

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025	2024
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property plant and equipment	2	281,745	306,763
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	3	633,841	437,301
Cash and cash equivalents	4	41,457,111	26,243,200
		42,090,952	26,680,501
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>42,372,697</b>	<b>26,987,264</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Equity</b>			
Reserves		14,242,266	9,454,057
Retained surplus		6,272,292	4,058,455
		<b>20,514,558</b>	<b>13,512,512</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	5	21,858,139	13,474,752
<b>TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		<b>42,372,697</b>	<b>26,987,264</b>

### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025	2024
Revenue	6	41,414,702	33,468,326
Other income	7	112,275	33,501
Operating expenses	8	36,896,196	(28,695,655)
Operating profit (loss)		<b>4,630,781</b>	<b>4,806,172</b>
Investment revenue		2,371,265	1,714,017
Profit (loss) for the year		<b>7,002,046</b>	<b>6,520,189</b>

# PARI

PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

2 Sherwood Road  
Forest Town  
Johannesburg, 2193  
T +27 (0) 11 482 1739  
E [info@pari.org.za](mailto:info@pari.org.za)

[www.pari.org.za](http://www.pari.org.za)

