

## **Female Leadership in a Rural School: A Feminist Perspective**

**Brigitte Smit**

*University of South Africa, Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa, 0003*

**KEYWORDS** Feminism. Relational Leadership. Narrative Inquiry

**ABSTRACT** This qualitative narrative inquiry focused on relational female leadership and ethics of care from a feminist perspective. Female leadership in a rural educational setting called for in-depth qualitative inquiries specifically on the African continent. In this inquiry one female school principal was researched over a period of three years. Empirical data were sourced from observations and guided conversations. The research participant was a female school principal of a rural primary (elementary) school, taught reading classes, gathered food for the hungry learners in her school, has established a Non-Profit Organisation, educated parents, disciplined learners, chaired committees, managed the school finances, initiated school building projects, and even made time to share as research participant her roles as a leader. Her school was located in a disadvantaged community, where most learners lived in squatter camps, 85% of the parents were unemployed, many were refugees from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and many were orphaned, and most had only one meal per day, which was provided by the school. This narrative inquiry was framed in relational leadership and spoke to how the principal found grounding in the complex demands of the everyday school activities, while not neglecting to enact curriculum leadership.