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Gender ARC and Global Women's Studies at NUI Galway are pleased to invite you to a research seminar:

'Some done - A lot more to do': Lessons from Research on Widening Participation in Higher Education & to the Professions

Dr. Elaine Keane, School of Education, NUI Galway

Date: Wednesday 28 January

Time: 1.00-2.00pm

Venue: Room 1001, First Floor, Hardiman Research Building, NUI Galway

Abstract: In line with international trends, higher education (HE) in Ireland has 'massified' in recent decades, yet significant socio-demographic disparities remain in the representation of certain groups. HE systems' attempts to widen participation have been motivated by social justice and economic concerns. Research has emphasised the importance of focusing not just on *progression to HE*, but also on the post-entry student experience, and more recently, research internationally has extended to consider progression to postgraduate level and into employment (including into the professions) for those from traditionally under-represented groups.

This paper will draw on three studies relating to the undergraduate experiences of access and traditional-entry students, the postgraduate and employment experiences of access students, and the socio-demographic profiles of applicants and entrants to the teaching profession. Processes of privilege and disadvantage, and of exclusion and inclusion, will be highlighted through an examination of the experiences of individuals occupying various socio-demographic positionings in their negotiations with, and through, the Irish school and HE systems and into employment. In the context of the forthcoming new national plan for equity of access HE in Ireland, it is argued that barriers to equality of opportunity and outcome remain deeply entrenched in the Irish educational system, resulting from a complex interaction of culturally-embedded mechanisms of exclusion and wider structural inequalities in society.

Dr Elaine Keane is a Lecturer in Sociology of Education in the School of Education at NUI Galway since 2006, where she is also Director of the Master of Education programme, Co-ordinator of PhD & MLitt programmes, and Chair of the Research Committee. She previously worked as a researcher in the Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (NUI Galway), as Project Co-ordinator of open distance learning access programmes (Lionra, Regional Higher Education Network), and as a post-primary school teacher.

Her research focus is widening participation in HE, including in initial teacher education, and she has particular interests in social class in education and grounded theory. She is Principal Investigator on the Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Employment Experiences of NUI Galway Access Students (funded by NUI Galway), and the Diversity in Initial Teacher Education (DITE) in Ireland national project, funded by the Irish Research Council (RPG2013-1). She has published in a range of journals, and in 2013 she authored the Ireland report for a six-country study of widening participation effectiveness, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). She is one of the co-authors of the forthcoming *Reflective Teaching in Higher Education* (Bloomsbury, February 2015), and also of a chapter on constructivist grounded theory in social justice research (with Professors Kathy Charmaz & Robert Thornberg) in the 5th edition of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (eds. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, 2016).