The fourth annual conference on the Economics of Social Sector Organizations on September 19 - 20, 2019, in London is now calling for papers. Cohosts include the Marshall Institute for Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship and Suntory and Toyota International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD) at the London School of Economics and Political Science, the Rustandy Center for Social Sector Innovation at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, and the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR).

The first day of the conference will be joint with CEPR’s Incentives, Management and Organisation (IMO) and Entrepreneurship Economics (ENT) groups and will feature a keynote speech by John Van Reenen, MIT Sloan School of Management and the Department of Economics. The second day of the conference will feature theoretical and empirical presentations that explore the broad range of organizations addressing social issues, the roles they play in society, their performance, and the reasons for their existence. A recap of papers presented at last year’s conference is available here.

The set of organizations that are neither traditional profit-maximizing firms nor traditional wholly publicly-owned and controlled government agencies has been growing. In addition to philanthropy-supported non-profit organizations, many non-profits are sustained by revenue from the services they provide and ancillary profit-generating activities. Some mission-driven organizations choose to be for-profits, either as a traditional corporate legal structure or as a legal organization designed specifically for mission-driven for-profit organizations such as a benefit corporation in many US states. Some traditional corporations choose to invest substantially in corporate social responsibility, perhaps as a means to maximize financial returns, perhaps not. Governments participate in public-private partnerships and outsource activities to for-profit and non-profit private organizations. Many of these organizations’ primary or only activity is providing government-funded services.

The institutions that finance these organizations are also evolving. The lines between traditional philanthropy and financial investment are blurring with the growth of impact investing funds – both concessionary funds that are willing to trade off financial returns for social impact and non-concessionary fund that are not. Some foundations and family offices are making program-related investments and managing their endowments with an eye on their social objectives. The institutions of philanthropy include venture philanthropy organizations that intermediate individual philanthropy and actively engage with the organizations they support. Financial institutions offer investor portfolios with negative screens that do not include companies engaged in specific harmful activities or positive screens that only include companies that meet specific beneficial criteria. Social impact bonds and other financial instruments aim to create novel ways to fund social innovation.

We seek empirical and theoretical papers that further our understanding of these organizations the roles they play in society, their performance, and the reasons for their existence.

We welcome submissions that explore the internal workings of social sector organizations (including organizational structures, management practices, incentives and human resource management, social and economic performance measurement, financing, and governance), the industrial organization of the social sector (including competition, productivity, scaling, and innovation); financial institutions of the social sector (including impact investing, philanthropy, and foundations); legal, regulatory and tax policy for social sector organizations; the political economy of social sector institutions; corporate social responsibility; and how social preferences and decisions of consumers, investors, employees, managers, volunteers, and philanthropists affect social sector organizations, markets, and society.

Please submit papers or extended abstracts to Salma.Nassar@chicagobooth.edu by April 19, 2019.
The scientific committee for the Economics of Social Sector Organizations Conference: Nava Ashraf (LSE), Marianne Bertrand (Booth), Robert Gertner (Booth), Maitreesh Ghatak (LSE), and Emir Kamenica (Booth).

The scientific committee for Incentives, Management and Organisation:
Oriana Bandiera, London School of Economics and CEPR
Morten Bennedsen, University of Copenhagen, INSEAD and CEPR
Guido Friebel, Goethe University, Frankfurt and CEPR
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Marco Ottaviani, Bocconi University and CEPR
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The scientific committee for Entrepreneurship Economics:
Luigi Guiso, Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance and CEPR
Thomas Hellmann, Sauder School of Business
William Kerr, Harvard Business School
Lars Persson, Research Institute of Industrial Economics and CEPR
Mirjam van Praag, Copenhagen Business School and CEPR
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