

Yale *Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale*

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Y-RISE Conference – **Call for Papers**

Dates: December 15-21, 2019

Location: Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands

Submission Deadline: October 2, 2019 (Midnight US ET)

courier
Henry R. Luce Hall, Room 309
34 Hillhouse Avenue
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The [Yale Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale \(Y-RISE\)](http://yriseyale.edu) is pleased to invite paper submissions for its annual meetings in December 2019.

Y-RISE supports research on the complexities of scaling up policy interventions. In recent decades, social scientists have developed a rigorous toolkit for evaluating the effects of interventions, but changes in context or scale can limit the ability of such evaluations to serve as a forward-looking guide to policy. Y-RISE has assembled thematic research networks, is setting up research sites in partnership with implementers who operate at scale, and supports new research to develop insights around different challenges or implications of scale. For more information, please visit <http://yriseyale.edu>.

In December four of the Y-RISE research networks and three of its priority research initiatives in specific sectors will convene for workshops in Grand Cayman. We welcome paper submissions for any of these seven meetings. Brief descriptions of the research networks are outlined below, followed by descriptions of the research initiatives.

Research Network Meetings (Dec 16, 18, 19, 21)

Political Economy Effects of Policy Interventions – December 16

Convened by Frederico Finan (UC-Berkeley) and Gerard Padró i Miquel (Yale)

From crowd-in or crowd-out of public spending to voting behavior and political accountability, scaling a program can affect political behavior in a number of ways, with implications for the effectiveness of the program itself alongside other economic and political outcomes. Successfully scaling a program requires understanding how the program interacts with the political landscape – especially if governments become key implementation partners in the scale-up process.

Evidence Aggregation and External Validity – December 18

Convened by Aprajit Mahajan (UC-Berkeley) and Edward Vytlačil (Yale)

Social norms, institutions, and even the weather can mediate the effects of a program, causing those effects to vary by location, times, and the characteristics of beneficiaries; this question of external validity, how a program works outside the context of existing evaluations, complicates decisions to scale up or even continue programs that appear promising. To make inferences about large-scale policy change also requires us to develop methods to aggregate evidence across different studies.

Macro, Growth, and Welfare Effects of Policy Interventions – December 19

Convened by Joseph Kaboski (Notre Dame) and David Lagakos (UC-San Diego)

The changes in individual behavior induced by a program can, at scale, have impacts on the macroeconomy – creating feedback loops whose effects may manifest over time. Measuring those changes alone gives an incomplete view of the program, as they can alter the behavior of firms, lenders, and governments, leading to structural shifts and welfare impacts that may emerge only in the medium- or long-term. Combining macroeconomic theory with evidence from RCTs can be used to predict the effects of large-scale programs on the structure and trajectory of the macroeconomy.

Spillovers, Network and Equilibrium Effects of Policy Interventions – December 21

Convened by Mushfiq Mobarak (Yale) and Mark Rosenzweig (Yale)

Programs often affect non-beneficiaries in addition to the individuals directly targeted by the program. Spillovers across individuals, groups, or areas induced by scale can substantially amplify or undermine the intended effects of a program. The spillovers considered in this conference may include, but are not limited to, general-equilibrium effects via markets, health externalities such as contagion, formal bank intermediation, or the transmission of information and/or the transfer of financial resources across members of a network.

Workshops on Specific Research Initiatives (Dec 15, 17, 20)

We are in the process of setting up research sites to study the complexities associated with scaling up three (sets of) policy interventions described below. The goal is to conduct new research on both the direct effects as well as the indirect political economy, general equilibrium, and macroeconomic implications of these few policy interventions. We are hosting these workshops to take stock of existing research on these topics and brainstorm about new research directions.

Alleviating Seasonal Poverty – December 15

Led by Kelsey Jack (UC-Santa Barbara)

Many individuals in poor rural areas live below the poverty line only for some portion of the year, typically in the time leading up to harvest when agricultural job opportunities become scarce and the economy waits for crops to grow. Despite the temporary and predictable nature of this poverty cycle, it can lead to reduced agricultural productivity and cause lasting harm to child health and learning, among other adverse outcomes. Providing loans, subsidies, or interventions to improve labor markets during periods of seasonal deprivation can help households smooth consumption and insure themselves against future seasonal shocks.

Innovations to Overcome Information Failures – December 17

Led by Robert Jensen (Yale)

In addition to the well-documented resource constraints that poor households often face, there is growing evidence that limited access to information may also prevent them from

making welfare-improving decisions. Simply providing relevant information to individuals about the decisions they face – such as the returns to schooling – presents a cost-effective way to encourage choices and investments with long-lasting benefits. Innovations in information technologies and network theory could potentially play a role in overcoming information failures at scale.

Innovations to Improve Agricultural Extension – December 20

Led by Lori Beaman (Northwestern), Jeremy Magruder (UC-Berkeley), Michael Kremer (Harvard)

Information failures that prevent farmers from learning about new technologies and optimal farming practices can be a major impediment to growth in agricultural productivity. Agricultural extension aims to address these failures by disseminating information about new technologies, typically through wide networks of extension officers. Recent innovations in extension services that leverage the proliferation of information technologies and insights from research about social learning may offer promising, cost-effective solutions to encourage adoption of high-return technologies.

Submission process

Please email submissions to yrise@yale.edu with the subject header “December Conference – [Meeting name]” no later than October 2, 2019, midnight US ET. The [Meeting Name] should indicate the meeting that your paper is the best fit for, but in the body of the email, please feel free to note the primary meeting you are submitting to, plus up to two additional meetings where the paper may fit. Interested researchers may make multiple submissions. We prefer completed papers, but we will consider detailed paper abstracts in PDF format. The cover page of each submission must include the paper title, abstract, authors, affiliations, and contact information for the applicant. Applicants will be notified by October 14.

We intend for these meetings to have a slightly different balance than a typical conference; in addition to research presentations, ample time will be devoted to discussing and developing the research agenda around scale up. We can therefore accommodate only a limited number of presentation slots in each meeting.

Accommodations and expenses

Y-RISE is pleased to offer accommodation and reimbursement for reasonable economy-class travel expenses for one author per paper. We have reserved rooms at a hotel on Grand Cayman at a discounted group rate. To make it easier for presenters to travel with family if they wish to during this period approaching the December holidays, we have arranged with the hotel such that some of the rooms can be upgraded to a suite that can accommodate 2 adults + 2 children, for a small upcharge.

Please direct any questions regarding this call for papers to yrise@yale.edu.