MSOM 2025 Annual Meeting Keynote Talk

Meaning At Work

Speaker: Professor Oriana Bandiera

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Saturday 28 June 2025, 13:00 – 13:45 (Nuffield Hall, North Building First Floor)

Professor Bandiera will speak on her work examining a firm's worker-centered solution to the agency problem: helping employees reduce effort costs instead of using performance rewards. In a randomized roll-out of the "Discover Your Purpose" program with 2,976 white-collar employees, performance improves as low performers either leave or improve. The meaning-pay trade-off flattens as those with low meaning and high pay exit. The intervention shifts priorities, narrows gender gaps in preferences and behaviors, and increases uptake of parental leave. A cost-benefit analysis shows high shared returns, which are underestimated by observational data.

Based on joint work with Nava Ashraf, Virginia Minni, and Luigi Zingales.

Bio: Professor Oriana Bandiera is the Sir Anthony Atkinson Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, and an honorary foreign member of the American Economic Association, a fellow of the British Academy, the Econometric Society, CEPR, BREAD and IZA. She is director of the Hub for Equal Representation at the LSE and of the Gender, Growth and Labour Markets in Low-Income Countries (G²LM|LIC) programme at IZA. She serves on the council of the Econometric Society, on board of the International Growth Centre and of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics. Her research has been awarded the IZA Young Labor Economist Prize (2008), the Carlo Alberto Medal (2011), the Ester Boserup Prize (2018), the Yrjö Jahnsson Award (2019), the Arrow Award (2021) and an Honorary Doctorate in Economics from the University of Munich (2021). At the LSE she teaches the undergraduate Development Economics course, for which she won a Student Union Award in 2020.