



Putting Tools of Dialogue to Work

Hello friends of Xenia,

Things at the Institute are going well. Two major initiatives are on my mind this month. First, we are deep into our second phase (of the three phase program) with our two dialogue groups. The groups have taken up issues to learn about and work with. It's important to understand that we are not only working with issues for their own sake, but are also focusing on the communication and processing skills required to take on a variety of issues. That way, when a dialogue fellow comes upon an issue in his or her life outside of Xenia, he or she will have the tools and practice to consider the issue in an objective way that looks at as many sides as possible.

One of our groups is taking up the issue of community engagement and civic participation. This is an enormous issue that encompasses several elements of community life together, from voting and staying aware of important community initiatives to joining local civic clubs and volunteering at various shelters and helping agencies. This group is working with one article on American Democracy and one article on building social capital.

The other group is taking on perhaps one of the largest issues of all: water.

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Who We Are

The Xenia Institute brings people together, creates a safe space for dialogue and transforms dialogue into action.



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Banking for the Poor

How microfinance changes both women's futures and cultural norms

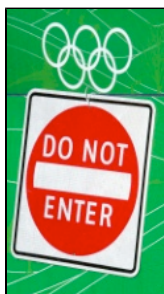
This month, Xenia Institute intern Cynthia Kao began a multipart series examining the history, politics and future of microfinance -- small loans of a few dollars, usually managed by nonprofits that lend funds to women in order to help them bring themselves and their communities out of poverty. One of the key players in microfinance is Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank (pictured at right), and included with Cynthia's article is a video of Yunus talking about how the idea for microlending began. Cynthia's article examines not only the good that microfinance does, but also critiques some of its failures.



This article is one of The Xenia Institute's Featured Articles, which are published regularly on our newsmagazine site. [Read more Featured Articles here.](#)

A Ringing Critique

Bloggers take a closer look at social issues surrounding 2010 Winter Olympics



After the thrills of international competition surrounding the Vancouver Winter Games faded, bloggers looked at issues overlooked during the two-week sports fest, such as gender issues during competition and the rights of indigenous peoples. Xenia's News & Analysis highlighted some of the critiques.

Each weekday, The Xenia Institute's News & Analysis publishes aggregations of blog posts and columns that tackle the topics people are talking about. [Read Xenia's News & Analysis section here.](#)

Guest Voices

What challenges and inspirations are people age 50 and over facing in the 21st century? Guest blogger Marsha Trent reviews the book *The Third Chapter: Passion, Risk and Adventure in the 25 Years After 50* by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot for Voices of Xenia, and discusses how these "new learners" (rather than retirees) are changing the way we look at work and life.

Marsha's review is the first in a six-week series of guest blogs being featured at Voices of Xenia. The blogs will cover a range of topics from constitutional law to the finer points of dialogue. Watch for a new guest blog each week.

[Read more Voices of Xenia blogs here.](#)