

January 25, 2015

## **Kira Sinclair-Thomson on Global Health Gateway**

The centre we volunteered with is co-ordinated by an Australian registered nurse, Val Smith-Orr. Val has lived on site for the past six years and volunteers her time and expertise to poverty-stricken children with cleft lip and/or palates, as well as those who have suffered burns. Val is also the foster parent of a six year old that has a cleft lip and palate. The clinic relies heavily on volunteers and donations to assist with therapy. Without this centre many children living in poverty would not have access to essential surgery and therapy, so we were thrilled to be able to assist. I worked with a multitude of children with cleft lip and/or palates of all ages and severities. The focus of the therapy is to improve the clarity of speech production, so that the children can better communicate in their daily lives, both now and in the future.

During my time at the centre, I worked with Val and her therapy assistant to develop various resources to further improve the services currently being provided. This trip was the opportunity of a lifetime. I was able to contribute and support others while growing, enjoying and experiencing another culture.