As a part of a team of 12 medical students, I volunteered to join the Team Med Palampur Health Initiative 2011 which was based in Palampur, Northern India. This initiative involved conducting primary health screening and health education clinics for children and adults. I travelled to various daycare centers and primary schools, conducting basic health check-ups for children aged 6 months to 16 years with a backdrop of the Himalayan mountains. I was also fortunate enough to visit a hospital which provided Ayurvedic medicine which is focused on restoring a balanced state through the use of many traditional therapies such as plant-based medicines. Other activities included visiting a local hospital and learning about the impact HIV has on the community, visiting tea plantations (one of the community’s largest commodities) and performing health check-ups on the plantation workers and their families, many of whom do not have access to basic medical care.

I am currently in my first clinical year of medical studies and the contrast this experience has provided in terms of access to medical resources and differences in disease burden between the developing and developed world has been invaluable. This experience has inspired me to pursue more opportunities to learn about global health issues and I hope to be meaningfully involved in efforts to reduce the gap in healthcare between developing and developed nations throughout my medical career.
This photo shows a few of the Team Med volunteers enjoying the beautiful scenery of Palampur.