Issue
Portugal finds itself facing high levels of Oral diseases that can have a significant impact on quality of life when they compromise basic functions (e.g. chewing, talking) and overall health.

The district of Oporto (Portugal) has 1/3 of the Portuguese Beneficiaries of the Social Insertion Income. Shaky employment and unemployment, are important factors of poverty and social exclusion. NGO Mundo a Sorrir elected this as the priority area of intervention of the Oral Health Support Centre (CASO), providing to the neediest populations oral health treatments that will contribute to improve their life conditions and increase local development.

Problem
CASO is the only Social dental clinic in Portugal in which all dentists work voluntarily. Implemented in 2009 in the city of Oporto with the main purpose of providing medical and dental treatment for the low-income population.

Can a solid oral health prevention be linked to a higher self-esteem and better health conditions? Could it facilitate the inclusion of some individuals into the society?

Results
This project beneficiated more than 3,000 patients, performed 18,848 treatments and 156 prosthetics rehabilitations. A prospective analysis Social Return on Investment (SROI) was used to measure the impact of the provision of medical and dental care in the lives of people without access to them. The SROI ratio obtained was 1:3.89 euros (per 1 euro invested, there is a social return of 3.89 euros). This allowed us to identify changes generated by this intervention: increased knowledge about oral health, improved self-esteem health and psychological well-being, improvement of interpersonal/social relationships and greater employment chances.

Lessons
This project involves the stimulation of public and private organizations, to acknowledge the needs of Oral Health in Portugal and how its promotion contributes to the improvement of public health. On 18th April 2015 we replicated this project in Braga, with the partnership of the City Council.

Key message
- "I felt like I was still young, to be with my mouth so badly treated. I still would be with no teeth because financially I couldn’t. The end of treatment was the best moment I had in my life"