# Oral Health Support Center (Oporto, Portugal)

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**Problem:**

Portugal finds itself facing high levels of Oral diseases that can have a significant impact on the quality of life when they compromise basic functions (e.g. chewing, talking) and overall health. Work and school productivity and social inclusion are also tremendously affected.

The district of Oporto (Portugal) has 1/3 of the Portuguese Beneficiaries of the Social Insertion Income, being unemployment one of the most relevant factors. NGO Mundo a Sorrir elected this as the priority area of intervention of the Oral Health Support Center (C.A.S.O.), providing to the neediest populations oral health treatments that will contribute to improve their life conditions and increase local development.

**Description of the problem:**

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

C.A.S.O. (Oral Health Support Center) is the only Social dental clinic in Portugal in which 25 dentists work voluntarily on a regular basis. Implemented in 2009 in Oporto city with the main purpose of providing medical and dental treatment for the low-income population.

**Results:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prosthetics Rehabilitions</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>18,848</td>
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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:**

- Our biggest challenge is not to replace the Government duties but to raise awareness on the main oral health inequalities and innovate in public health policies.
- On 18th April 2015 we replicated this project in Braga, with the partnership of the City Council.
- The sustainability of this kind of project is essential, therefore, Mundo a Sorrir is working on a new methodology to guarantee that this project is an example of social innovation and good practices.