“For the first time in a long time, I saw my children happy. Thanks to the aid we received, I forgot all my pains and struggles.”

Hameda Al-Husni [name changed] GOAL aid recipient from Qaysiyeh village, Syria, with her family.

The Al-Husni family, recipients of GOAL Syria’s Special Needs Fund Programme, in Qaysiyeh village, Syria.
EVEN A SINGLE RESPONSE CAN CHANGE LIVES

The conflict in Syria is now in its eighth year. Since 2012, GOAL has been one of the leading humanitarian actors in-country, reaching more than 800,000 beneficiaries in northern Syria in 2018 alone. Nonetheless, many families remain in severe need of immediate humanitarian assistance. GOAL’s Special Needs Fund (SNF) provides families like the Al-Husnis in Idleb Governorate, who are among the most vulnerable, with much-needed assistance.

The Al-Husni family live in Qaysiyeh village located in Jisr-Ash-Shugur Sub-District in Jisr-Ash-Sughur District, Idleb, one of the poorest and most montainous areas in Syria. In the area, there are several families who require acute humanitarian assistance that have been assessed by GOAL’s SNF Team. The assessment team managed to visit 87 households in February 2019, including the Al-Husni family, which were identified as households with heightened humanitarian needs.

The Al-Husni family live in a dwelling which barely resembles a house, much less an adequate home. It is an ill equipped, humid, unventilated building, infested with rats and mice. The family has no water tank or kitchen equipment. They use a stove as their only source of heat but cannot afford to buy fuel, so they are forced to burn old clothes and any trash they can collect.

"We never know if we will be able to find anything to burn so we can warm up our home," said Hameda Al-Husni [name changed], wife of Feras Al-Husni [name changed].

Feras [name changed] suffers from both mental and physical health conditions, rendering his wife the sole provider for the family. However, her severe back pain makes it difficult for her to find work. To supplement household income, Hameda has had little choice but to resort to begging.

Hameda and Feras have four children. Three of them (two sons and a daughter) are under the age of 14 and have been forced to leave school. Their fourth child, a daughter, recently married, despite being under the age of 18 years. The unimaginable poverty this family is facing poses a high risk of child labour for the children. The family’s youngest daughter often assists her mother to beg, with their other children sometimes sent to work for their neighbours.
Hameda explained, “We cannot secure a future for our children whose only fault is to be born in war. I cannot afford to send them to school and I have no other choice but take them to beg with me on the streets. Sometimes people give us food, clothes, or money and this helps to us carry on.”

The family has no other income. At the time of assessment they had received no assistance whatsoever from an aid organisation. During the assessment it was calculated that the family requires at least 60,000 Syrian Pounds (around 120 USD) for basic monthly expenses such as water and food, further compounded by the existence of a debt of circa 100,000 Syrian Pounds (200 USD). The provision of cash aid would enable them to buy food and water, while also alleviating their debt.

GOAL identified the Al-Husni family as eligible to receive cash distribution aid under GOAL’s Special Needs Fund programme. The Al-Husni family received 200 USD cash aid from GOAL and with this money they were able purchase one of their most pressing items: wood for their stove.

GOAL returned to consult with the Al-Husni family after they received the aid. “I have started to believe in the future again. There are people who are not indifferent to our needs,” Hameda declared.

“We bought enough firewood to keep us warm throughout the winter. Now we know that we have enough fuel for heating and cooking. With the aid we received, we are able to buy different kinds of food that my children have not eaten for months, such as fruit, eggs, meat and cheese.”

The father of the house did not talk much, and in both meetings with GOAL, the only way he expressed himself was through a timid smile on his face. During the second visit, however, this smile had become bigger and brighter.
The Al-Husni family pose together for a photograph during GOAL’s visit after the family received their aid distribution.

Hameda continued to share how the aid affected their lives.

“My children were very happy when I came home with full bags of food. For the first time in a long time, I have seen my children happy.”