



**ISLAMIC
RELIEF
USA**

PEACEBUILDING IN JORDAN

Two and a half years ago, Tohan Salloum's family in Syria received a call from an aunt in Jordan, encouraging them to come to Jordan for their safety.

When they arrived, however, Tohan was shocked at the reception from other members of the community. "Even my cousin was not welcoming us and was not happy with us being here, telling us that we are the cause of many troubles," said Tohan, now 20.

Mohammed Al-Sarhan, a 25-year-old member of the Jordanian host community, said many communities are experiencing severe financial strain. He said, "All of us put the blame on the arrival of Syrians that caused prices to incline in every aspect, and that caused a lot of problems between the two [Jordanians and Syrians]." The hard feelings on both sides erupted in many disagreements.

Mohammed and Tohan participated in a peacebuilding course offered by Islamic Relief and the Lutheran World Federation. The six workshops covered the following topics:

- Understanding conflict and conflict analysis
- Cooperative power and empathy
- Nonviolent communication
- Conflict resolution and mediation skills
- Hygiene awareness

"Now after the training course, my whole perception of the situation has changed," Mohammed said. "They didn't come here by will, and it's not their fault what they are going through. We as a host community should tolerate their presence and try to be helpful and just as much as possible, with the correct limits of course."

Tohan said the training course helped him acquire a strategy for dealing with such situations. The two young men agreed that now they see the similarities between the two communities that they couldn't see before.

Tohan said, "We should be standing side by side during these times."