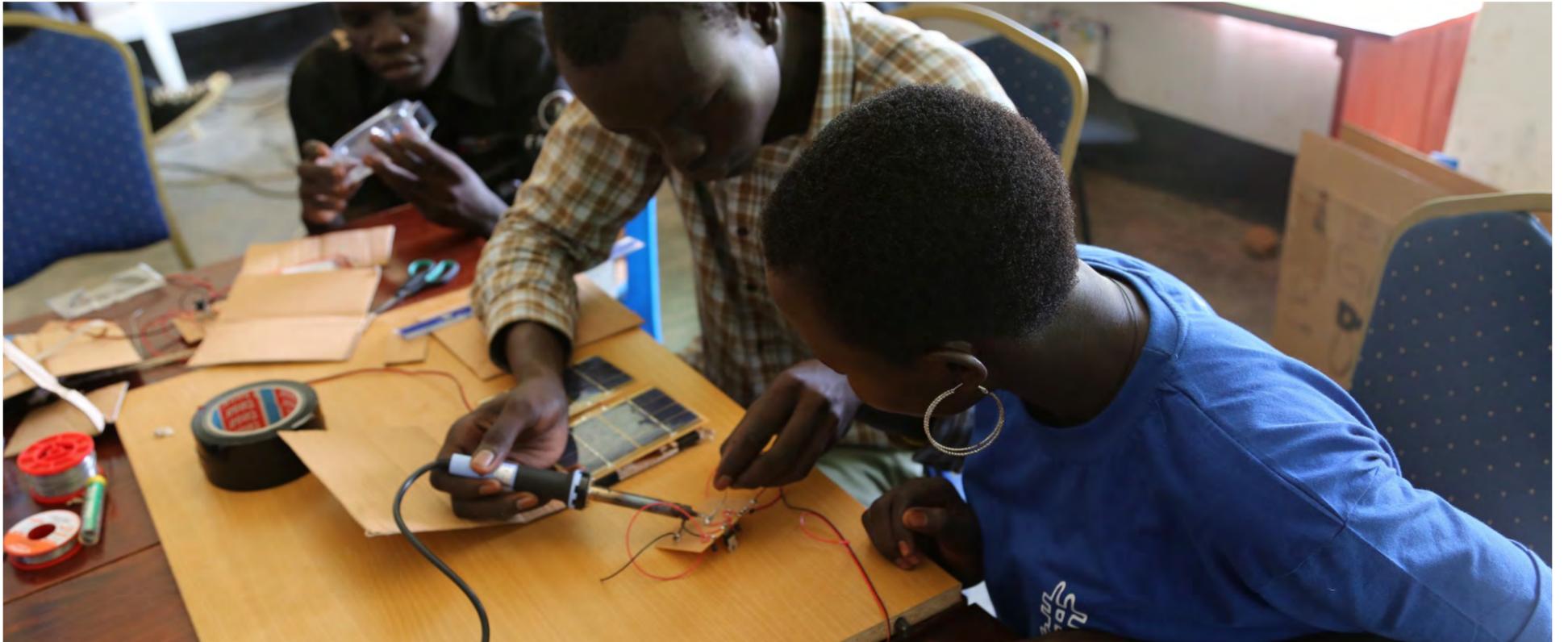


# #PeaceHackCamp—Building a Technology and Innovation Community in South Sudan



**“Today we learnt that what we thought was impossible is actually possible.”— #PeaceHackCamp participant**

To many observers South Sudan might seem like a strange place for a technology event. The four-year-old nation is one of the least developed on earth and, since 2013, an ongoing civil war has brought with it economic chaos, widespread displacement of people, and increased food insecurity. In South Sudan, “innovating” would perhaps seem to be less of a priority than simply surviving the many challenges faced daily. In times of crisis, however, the two are often linked. And the focus of the recent #PeaceHackCamp was firmly on

finding new, creative, South Sudanese solutions to South Sudan’s problems.

The three day #PeaceHackCamp, held at the beginning of December, was South Sudan’s first “hackathon,” although it was much more than that as well. The event brought together several hundred participants to concurrent sessions, including a mix of practical workshops, “codathons,” panel discussions and networking opportunities held across different venues in Juba.



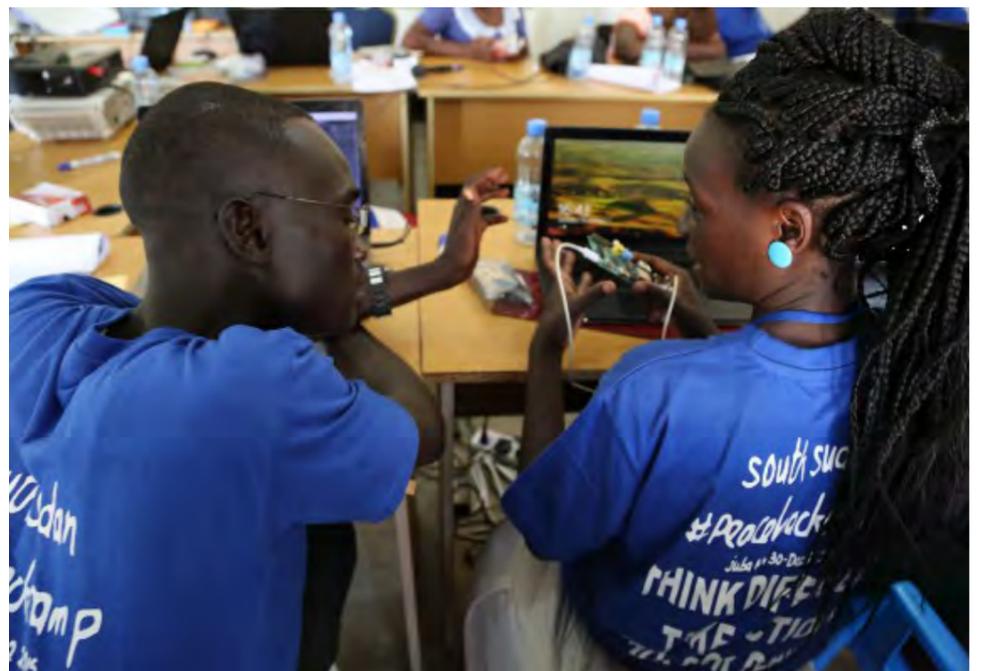
*#PeaceHackCamp participants enjoy a fun moment during a session on women’s empowerment.*

As befits a country where only 9% of people have ever had access to the Internet, the emphasis of the hack was not just on coding and programming, but included a mixture of high and low tech efforts at solving real world problems. Sessions ranged from working towards sustainable

agriculture, or “planting for peace,” to supporting youth entrepreneurship, and from designing mobile applications to an introduction to Wikipedia. A morning talking about access to markets might easily be followed by an afternoon of soldering a solar powered phone charger.



*In a country with no electricity grid, solar power plays an increasingly vital role. #PeaceHackCamp participants were able to build solar powered phone chargers.*



*Participants were able to engineer and program tailor-made computer tools using kits from Afrimakers.*