

Nigerian entrepreneur builds electric mini-buses in clean energy push

By [Seun Sanni](#)

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Nigerian entrepreneur Mustapha Gajibo has been converting petrol mini-buses into electric vehicles at his workshop, but he is now going a step further to build solar battery-powered buses from scratch in a push to promote clean energy and curb pollution.



A man plugs a charging cable into a solar-powered minibus at the charging station along Baga-Kazuwa road in Maiduguri, Nigeria on 4 May 2022. Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde

Africa's top producer and exporter of crude oil has heavily-subsidised gasoline and a patchy supply of electricity -- a combination that might discourage anyone from investing in electric vehicles.

But Gajibo, a 30-year-old university drop-out and resident of Maiduguri city in Nigeria's northeast, is undaunted. He says rising global oil prices and pollution make electric vehicles a worthwhile alternative in Nigeria.

At his workshop, he has already stripped combustion engines from 10 mini-buses, powering them with solar batteries. The buses, which have been operating for just over a month, cover a distance of 100 km on a single charge, he said.

His most ambitious project is building the buses from scratch. They will be equipped with solar panels and batteries.

"As I am speaking to you now at our workshop, we are building a 12-seater bus which can cover up to 200 kilometres on one charge," Gajibo said.

"Before the end of this month we are going to unveil that bus, which will be the first of its kind in the whole of Nigeria," he said, adding that his workshop had capacity to produce 15 buses a month.

In Nigeria, like most of Africa, electric vehicles have not yet gained traction because they are more expensive and there is little electricity and no infrastructure to charge vehicles.

For now, Gajibo has one charging station powered by solar.

There are other hurdles like foreign currency shortages that make it difficult to import parts. So, he is looking to source them in Nigeria.

"We have been substituting some materials with local materials to bring our costs down and maximise profit," said Gajibo.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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