

Title: One Man's Resolute Battle for Solar Power Advancement in Africa

What happens when renewable energy experts defer to local opposition in the face of climate change threats?

By Dayo Rufai

August 6, 2023

This article is the fourth installment in a series delving into the conflict surrounding the proliferation of solar power in rural Nigeria.

***Ogun State—**Growing up in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Okeowo Olasubomi experienced electricity outages that could last for weeks due to factors beyond the control of the citizens, often stemming from the city's heavy manufacturing industries.*

Having embarked on a career managing public solar systems, he founded a renewable energy company last year. His goal? To bolster the expansion of solar power throughout Africa, helping the region offset its history of environmental degradation and inadequate access to electricity.

Sporting his signature T-shirts emblazoned with his company's name and "solar city gas" logo, along with his penchant for dark sweaters, Olasubomi's journey has brought him to the limelight.

Enviroque Group of Technology Companies for Reasonable Energy, electric cars, and portable solar power generators was Olasubomi's brainchild. He initiated this endeavor due to his concern that the local proliferation of solar devices in Nigeria needed to be improved by opposition peddling subpar Grade B products.

"Somebody needs to stand up and say, 'The emperor has no clothes here,'" he asserted.

While he empathized with neighbors wary of batteries and used panels imported from Canada, fearing their negative impact on the ecosystem and the community's aesthetics, his empathy was restrained when compared to the environmental benefits, local governance, and educational funding.

He highlighted the ongoing tension across the nation, emphasizing the necessity for government officials to be equipped with the appropriate technology to assess industry quality and standards. The dispute gained momentum through social media posts that sounded alarms about health repercussions and property devaluation, even though the evidence supporting these concerns was thin.

Although the Solar fight in Nigeria has yet to capture widespread attention, its resolution holds the power to influence the ecological equilibrium of Nigeria and the entire African continent.

He told reporters about a memorable drive to Lekki a few months ago, passing through Ajah Express Road, where he witnessed housing subdivisions fading into Banex shopping mall. His company had successfully deployed a solar-powered 2 MW inverter project adorned with glistening solar panels under the sun's embrace.

Okeowo and his team personally oversaw the placement of 1300 solar panels and turned their vision into reality with the Banex Mall Solar project.

"It took years and years and years of effort (and) lots and lots of defeats, but I conquered," he recounted. "I just wouldn't give up. We just kept doing the right thing, and eventually, things changed."

The outcome of Solarcitygas' determination will serve as a litmus test for whether state regulators will reject proposals solely due to the influence of local business owners—the unfolding future promises intriguing developments.

Contact: dayorufai@gatewaynews.com

Stay Informed with Our Newsletters

Receive unparalleled climate news in your inbox. Our original stories and curated highlights from around the web offer comprehensive insights—delivered daily or weekly, free of charge.

Gateway news Weekly

Inside Clean Energy

Today's Climate

Breaking News

Email Address

Email Address

I agree to the terms of service and privacy policy.

Related