

# Innovator eyes energy-efficient cooker to cut high cost of fuel

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The high cost of energy has pushed Mr Peter Mugo to come up with a way to help consumers spend less on cooking fuel.

And after years of research on an energy-efficient cooker, early this year Mr Mugo developed PaRaMeko — a kerosene pressure cooker.

The invention, claims the former Kabete Institute-trained mechanical engineer, is self pressurised and the flames it generates have negligible amounts of carbon dioxide content.

He says that the environmentally-friendly cooker is designed from locally available materials and in such a way that it consumes minimal amounts of paraffin.

For instance, with two litres of paraffin, one can cook food for five to six hours, he says.

In Mr Mugo's estimation, it is only a matter of time before many Kenyans turn to the cooker instead of other sources of fuel, say, charcoal, gas, or paraffin stoves.

However, unlike the conventional cooking gas cylinders where consumers exchange at a fee from dealers, pressure can be added to a PaRaMeko cooker for free at a petrol station (just like a car tyre) or using a foot pump — which is

provided at the point of purchase. The cooker needs pressure refilling twice a month, he says.

Mr Mugo says that according to his research, the intensity of the heat generated by his cooker is more compared to that of conventional gas cookers.

“I don’t believe in importing gas any more. The cooker’s fire is more intense than the fire produced from gas. Since Kenya discovered oil in Turkana, it will be unwise to continue importing gas for domestic use. The money can be used for other development purposes. The new cooker will remain unmatched because of its efficiency”, he told *Money*.

“I wanted to make a modern cooker with capacity to hold bigger volume of kerosene and air or pressure for long periods. I can say without fear of contradiction that I am proud of this successful idea”, adds the 55-year-old businessman.

He has developed three types of the kerosene pressure cooker — a 3.5-litre single burner kerosene cylinder retailing at between Sh3,000 and Sh3,500, a 10-litre single and twin burner cylinder fetching between Sh4,000 and Sh5,000.

However, Mr Mugo expects that the prices will go down by almost half once he opens his manufacturing plant.

“Our customers are mostly individuals both from urban and rural areas but our target is to reach out to both the poor and middle class. We anticipate that schools, institutions, hotels, and restaurants will be our next market. After getting our certification from the Kenya Bureau of Standards in less than two months from now, I expect to roll out our ambitious plan of marketing the product in Kenya and other East African countries before going continental,” says Mr Mugo.

“To popularise the product, I think I will need to employ many marketers both directly and indirectly. There will also be the need to have agents. So, I think the business will employ thousands of people indirectly,” he says.