

# The Role of Human Resource Management in African Construction Companies

**Bipini Chandra Mallik**

MBA Scholar, B. N Bahadur institute of Management Sciences, University of Mysore, Mysore, Karnataka, India – 570017, India

Contact: 8861919446

*bipinichandra@gmail.com*

Running Title: *Case study of Guicopres - Guinea*

**Abstract:** *African countries have been heavily investing in construction projects, both infrastructure and superstructure. The construction industry is one the rapidly growing sectors in the continent and it greatly contributes to employment. The population increase and the urbanization in the continent, the strong growth of the construction sector is inevitable. However, there are still many crucial challenges to overcome, financing, available electrical grids, transportation, procurement, and skilled employees. Human Resources Management plays an important role within a Construction Organizations, Institutions, Associations or Companies in terms of work distribution. It is also the principal nerve otherwise the skeleton of any business that we want to achieve an efficient and effective goal in short, medium and long run time. Our case of study, GUICOPRESS - Guinea shows the real situation of building construction in Africa in general and Guinea in particular. Guinea is a large open work place which needs to be well - structured and organized, because of the lack of modern facilities around the country. Conakry the capital city has poor architecture and infrastructures. Shanties are sharing the same zone or space with luxurious buildings here and there so that it is difficult to see the beauty of the city although it is the largest city in Guinea. According to the business local magazine “Gniouma, 2020”, GUICOPRESS employs more than 10, 000 employees in Guinea and stays the leader of small and medium size companies in Guinea. This strong capacity of that enterprise is due to the strong policy implemented by its General Management Director, who likes innovating his works, by investing some huge amount of money in manpower and machinery purchasing. Beyond its financial contribution, GUICOPRESS - Guinea contributes a lot in the charity’s field through its social unit called “KPC for Humanity” assisting beggars, building schools in remote areas for poor communities.*

**Keywords:** Human resources, Management, Construction Company, Africa, Guicopres

## 1. Introduction

Compared to many industries, the construction industry plays a vital role in African economy and is a significant contributor to economic growth (Construction industry development Board [CIDB], United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO],) view the construction industry as a critical sector of the economy that produces building and civil engineering structures and determines the extent to which investment efforts in a resource - rich country are translated into investment outcomes. UNIDO (2009) observes that the construction industry is not a single industry but rather a complex cluster of industries, including banking, materials and equipment manufacturers, contracting organizations and so forth. Construction industries plays an important role in the socio - economic development of any nation. Construction makes a significant contribution to the national economy, it creates employment (especially for the least skilled members of society), and it plays a role in the development and transfer of technology, it also create many opportunities for enterprises and contributes directly to improving the quality of life of the user of its product. However, several challenges have been identified as confronting and influencing the performance, development and the growth of African construction industry, though some of the challenges identified have existed for sometimes, there is a little evidence to suggest that the issues raised in the past are no longer current, due to the paucity of relevant and reliable information on the subject. The literature also suggests a variety of largely unexamined and divergent assumptions as to the nature of these challenges. This study therefore presents an investigation of the challenges assumed to influence the

performance, development and growth of the African construction industry. To accomplish this goal, the various challenges that have been

### Presentation of the Republic of Guinea

Guinea is located in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Guinea - Bissau and Sierra Leone. Its geographic coordinates are 11°00'N 10°00'W. Guinea's total area is 245, 857 km<sup>2</sup>, comprising 245, 717 km<sup>2</sup> of land and 140 km<sup>2</sup> of water.

Guinea's land boundaries span a total of 4, 046 km: with Ivory Coast 816 km, Guinea - Bissau 421 km, Liberia 590 km, Mali 1, 062 km, Senegal 363 km, and Sierra Leone 794 km. It has a 320 - km coastline, and claims an exclusive economic zone of 370.4 km; (230.2 miles)

With an area of 245, 857 km and a population of 12.6 million, according to World Bank estimates in 2015, the Republic of Guinea is still among the poorest countries in the world nonetheless the riches in available natural resources.

The republic of Guinea is divided into four natural regions based on the climate, resources, ethnics and cultures, each endowed with resources barely or even unexploited, namely:

- 1) **Lower Guinea** ranging from Boké, Boffa, Sangaredi, Kindia, to Forecariah upto Conakry rich in bauxite and cover the principal bauxite mining areas
- 2) **Middle Guinea** Fouta Jalon region ranging from Faranah extending upto Pita, Labé and Dalaba rich in Agro pastoral land and principal plains suitable for merchandise farming.

- 3) **Upper Guinea**, vast plain naturally suitable for agriculture and raising livestock and as well opulent in precious stones gold and diamond beneath the crust extending from Siguiri Mandiana, and Kerouane;
- 4) **Forest Guinea**, the region with the deepest vegetation covering and the heart of biodiversity eco - systems in Guinea.

#### Objectives Presentation of the Republic of Guinea

- To show how HRM position is necessary for any company, organization or institution to be run under the vigilance.
- To examine the service quality expectation, by hiring qualified labor force able to satisfy customers 'needs in term of services' delivery.
- To identify the problems/issues of human resource in the construction of a sustainable development project and finds the methods to improve it.
- As general objective, is to show how HRM position is necessary for any company, organization or institution to be ran under the vigilance of that department which recruits, appreciate the previous performance of any employee before being appointed for another position if that performance has been noticeable by the company. Therefore, from that general objective, one dependent objective comes out like:

#### Specific Objective

The HRM department is in charge to sell the image of the company GUICOPRESS, by hiring qualified labor force able to satisfy customers 'needs in term of services' delivery. Once customers share the vision and experience of the company, a kind of confidentiality will set up between GUICOPRESS - Guinea and the population. This study identifies HRM as one of the key aspects in the success of constructing a sustainable development project. It also addresses an objective identifying the problems/issues of human resource in the construction of a sustainable development project and finds the methods to improve it.

#### Research Problem

This paper enabled us to know how important was the role of the Human Resources Management Department within an enterprise such as GUICOPRES - Guinea. During our pre investigations, we have got the opportunity to meet the HRM'

representative on neighborhood work places for an hour talk, which was kept confidential. Other factor arising the point is the lack of modern urbanization that my country is encountering after a half century now. With innovative vision of GUICORES - Guinea, the whole Guinea will be under construction in a long run decade if the policy makers agreed upon to financially assist GUICORES in its building construction policy for the benefit of the Guinean citizens.

#### Research Questions

With regard to what is observed in terms of output and utility of the HRM in the field building construction by GUICOPRESS - Guinea, this research question is: *what is the role and position of the HRM within the building construction company GUICOPRES?* This question raises some key issues in the field of building construction in Guinea. According to data received from the Department of Logistics and Equipment of the concerned company, 2200 accommodations have been built in Conakry and in provincial cities as N'Zerekore, Kankan, Labe, Mamou, Faranah, Kindia and Boke for the regional independence from 2015 to 2019 (GUICOPRESS Logistics and Equipment, 2020). Every year, the company hires some new workers of various professional qualifications because of the number of its workplaces in Guinea and neighborhood countries as well. GUICOPRESS has about 1.500 local employees and 50 foreign engineers hired to supervise those workplaces in Guinea and in West Africa in the field of building construction. GUICOPRESS is today one of the largest multinational companies in Africa due its investments capacity in sub Saharan region. Guicopres is the construction company that resonate the right hope the young African generation in terms of employment. Therefore, many young visionaries find a better way to sustain their lives.

## 2. Methodology and Survey

The qualitative method used to make survey. In the research, 715 people of different earnings (engineers, workers and logistics managers) were questioned through a list of survey. We extended our survey not only to workers and engineers living in Conakry, but also concerned those who are working in nearest towns from Conakry, Dubreka and Coyah. A Likert scale/objective questions were asked to get some additional information from the interviewees

Questionnaires	Number of people say (yes)	Number of people say (No)
Are you satisfied with this company?	100	40
Is adequate training provided for the workers?	180	25
Does the HRM staff work effectively and efficiently?	150	15
Do you believe that this company will last in a long term?	100	10
Is GUICOPRESS beneficiary to Guinean?	90	5

## 3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collection of accurate information lasted for two weeks because workers are not in same place. Some are working in inland towns and some in Conakry. So it was compulsory to move in different workplaces in order to know the real situation of workers and the masterpieces that they are executing. In fact, the analysis of the data allowed us to

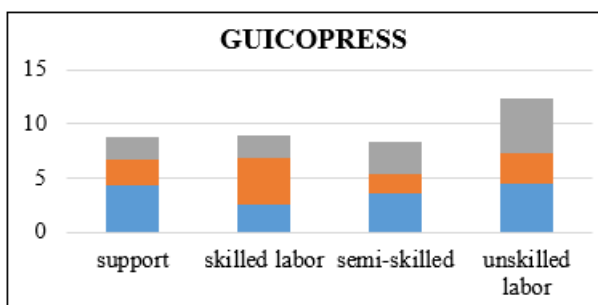
interview 200 People of different earnings and socio - professional qualification. As a result, 160 people answered 'YES and 40 people answered NO'' questionnaire about their working conditions, earnings and security once they are on their workplaces day and night. However, few workers stayed anonymous without any answers; because of the confidentiality they would like to preserve Vis a Vis to the company GUICOPRESS.

### SWOT Analysis (Strength, weakness and limitation

Any scientific research as human masterpiece is not perfect. Some strength will be noticed as well as some weakness in our research paper, which maybe the opportunity for some scholars to do their research in the future on it.

**Strength:** The strength of our research is shown through the achievement of numerous buildings realized by the building construction GUICOPRESS in Guinea and in Africa. This great reputation of the company is due to the performance and the innovation capacity of the manpower which is its personnel. The company has hired a dynamic personnel, which reflecting the image of its expectation in terms of Human Resources Management.

**Weakness:** According to field research, we found out that unskilled labors were more than the skilled labors which caused so many damages to the company. The results shown vary in terms of percentage of different types of labor construction in projects. Skilled labor formed only 20% of work force, 50% of workforce were unskilled and 30 were semi - skilled.



This mean that most of the workers involved in GUICOPRESS were unskilled.

### 4. Limitation

The study is conducted only in Conakry city in Republic of Guinea West Africa, as a result, the analysis done on the basis of information provided by the sample respondents may not be entirely faultless and generalizations drawn on the basis of the study may not be extended to the whole population. The limits of this research will be notified by the lack of some information that we are not going to be able to access or get from the company, or through the literature review and the documentation that will explore.

### 5. Conclusion

The sustainable development of any modern city is based on the capacity and innovation of the building construction company. GUICOPRES is a company which is hiring anytime some qualified workers since its creation in Guinea by 2011. Thanks to the strong vision of its managers, GUICOPRES is one of the largest building construction companies in West Africa. At GUICOPRES, workers, engineers and drivers are happy because they keep a strong relationship with the General Managing Director who in turn trusts on them.

### 6. Recommendations

The building and construction company GUICOPRES has to take into consideration some recommendations will try to improve their works and investments in the field of construction as following:

- GUICOPRES must still continue to invest more in the field of construction in Guinea;
- The company must try to gain the confidentiality of the local population by the quality of its works;
- GUICOPRES in short and long run term try to delocalize its HRM department in provincial capital cities N'Zerekore, Kankan, Boke and Kindia;
- The company must assist the government in public premises construction in order to give an attractive image to our country.
- We have done some suggestions and recommendations which will be beneficial for African Youth and Guineans as well if they are taken into consideration by policies makers and Head of States such as:
- The Chinese government should help young generation across Africa as well as Guinea in terms of effective and efficient Business policy and human resources management.
- According to the world bank 2013 - 2015 report, Poverty affected about 55% of Guinea's population due to EBOLA disease, the Guinean government needs to be assisted in economic development in order to solve social, health and education problems highly affected by this epidemic;
- Based on the above-mentioned report, and based on personal research, it is essential to open business facilities for this young generation and train them as a sustainable human resources managers for the betterment of my country.
- We would also appreciate any extra training in communication, conflict resolution, peace resolution, and waste management.

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