

# **Assessment of ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol in Promoting Regional Growth and Development in West Africa**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study will assess the activities of the Economic Community of West African State [ECOWAS] on regional integration, growth and development as a panacea to regional free movement of people and goods. ECOWAS was formed in 1975 with the objectives of among others facilitating economic development, fostering relation and promoting peace among her members. In her efforts of achieving these objectives, several protocols among which the protocol on free movement of people were adopted aimed at removing all obstacles for the movement of people across the subcontinent. Although, success has been recorded in removing all kinds of visa requirements through the introduction of one passport, little has been achieved of its much expectations. Non harmonization of currency, poor political commitment and existence of multiple checkpoints have hampered the success of the protocol. This study examined the success recorded and the challenges that hijacked the full implementation of the protocol; About a half a century of its creations, ECOWAS in spite her remarkable achievements in promoting unity, maintaining peace and enhancing political and economic relations, have yielded less particularly in relation to the implementation of the free movement protocol. Though, movement of goods and people is much more advanced in comparison to the earlier years of decolonization, it is still bedeviled by so many abuses. Since majority of West African people are not highly educated, there is a need for informal education system to acquaint people with the basic formalities or requirements involved in their cross border affairs within the sub region. There is also need for the automation of immigration and custom services to help fasten the procedures of border administration. The present manual system was found not suitable in the contemporary world.

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