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Utilizing E-Commerce for Humanitarian 2020

Since 2011, Libya has continued to face violent conflict, political turmoil, and deteriorating living conditions. The conflict between armed groups renewed several times, most notably the armed conflict over the city of Tripoli in 2019, which led to widespread displacement and deteriorating humanitarian conditions inside Libya. In this context, aid organizations are increasingly interested in utilizing additional methods to help vulnerable groups meet their basic needs, including cash-based interventions.

An analysis of the market situation in Libya was carried out by the REACH initiative and in partnership with the UNHCR / Cash and Markets Work Group (CMWG) to gain a better understanding of the market dynamics in the main cities of Libya. Based on these findings, CMWG and REACH recommend prioritizing cash and market responses where appropriate, especially in Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sabha. More importantly, the evaluation concludes that even if consumers, including refugees and migrants, have effective access to markets, lack of cash impedes consumers from obtaining commodities in the quantities required to meet their basic needs.

Considering the liquidity crisis, many banking services providers and technological solutions companies have provided several alternative solutions to cash in Libya. Despite the previous, it is difficult for foreigners residing in Libya to obtain these services because of the financial departments' policies in the government. This means that e-commerce alternatives must be found for vulnerable groups such as refugees and migrants to gain access to food and necessary supplies, and to accept donations offered internally or externally.

The following information brakes down a group of e-stores and looks at their suitability to provide direct services for the beneficiary. One of the solutions made available by these stores are to start an application for targeted groups.

This application can provide many options allowing the donors to do the following:

- Adding funds to beneficiaries' accounts as credit, by paying the company directly, thus excluding other payment methods.
- Predetermining the types of commodities made available to users, enforcing compliance with intended use of funds, whether it was food or health care.
- Delivery, as some stores, such as Dokkan, can deliver to most Libyan cities with added charge that can be negotiated with them.
- Customer services are provided by all stores in the market to their customer facilitating purchases using the application or direct order by phone.
- Periodic monitoring where the donor can monitor delivery to beneficiaries.
- Provide goods as requested by the donor, and as appropriate to beneficiary type for example, specific food items used by Syrian migrants.
- Periodic evaluation, where the delivery workers can collect more information about the beneficiary's condition and communicate it to the donors.

"List of the most prominent electronic stores and similar applications"

Dokkan Store

Dokkan website and application contains thousands of distinguished products. The site shows 95 different traders in the supplier list, and it is characterized by its diversification. It was launched in May 2015 and announced via Facebook. Store ratings: Facebook 4.6, Google Store 3.8, and Apple Store 4.2.

Pros

- Different payment methods: through bank cards, Sadad service and PayPal as well.
- Availability of both a website and an application.
- Delivery Service.

Cons

- Classification of goods is inconvenient and has many sub-lists. Many of these lists are empty.
- Some basic food commodities such as vegetables, dairy products and eggs are not available.
- Many of the non-food essentials are not available on the site such as personal hygiene and cleaning items, mother and child supplies, stationery, and clothing, attributed to a higher demand than the supply at times.
- Some types of detergents and cleaning supplies are on sale, but the basic ones are not made available.

Speza Store

An application that contains 22 different stores. Their page was created on Facebook in March 2018. This application was developed by Sadeem Technology and has the following ratings: Facebook 4.7, Google Store 4.5, and Apple Store 4.5.

Pro

- The ability to return products within 24 hours of purchase, excluding eating products.
- The application contains a food store that includes many basic food commodities.
- The site provides all essential vegetables through two stores of its suppliers.

Cons

- The city of Benghazi only.
- Apply only.
- Accept payment via Pay Me and Cash Only.

Guffa Shop

An e-commerce application available on Android and iPhone devices. Launched in the year 2019. Application reviews Google Store 4.4, Apple Store 4.9.

Pro

- The app is trying to incorporate known brands and they have succeeded to add an adidas store on their list.
- A variety of luxury items such as bags, perfumes, and others.
- A variety of smart phones and their accessories.

Cons

- Cash only.
- Tripoli and surrounding cities only.
- Apply only.
- Prices are relatively high.

Hanoot.ly Shop

One of the stores affiliated to Hanout Marketing and E-Commerce, based in Tripoli, the platform was the most recent to launch in April 2020.

Pro

- It has customer service.
- Accepts bank cards from Moamalat co., Tadawl co., Aman QR, Sadad and Mobi Cash and they take cash payments as well.
- Has options to sort products by price, customer evaluation, and brand.
- Includes all essential household items.

Cons

- It lacks basic food commodities such as dairy and dairy products, sugar, flour, oil and legumes as well as meats.

- Lack of detergents and personal hygiene supplies.
- It does not have mother and child supplies, clothes, or stationery.

Conclusion:

In case that there is any cash base intervention for Refugees or Immigrants we are highly recommend working with the eCommerce companies, to avoid the central bank restrictions, and high bank fees and implementer partner expenses.

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