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1 in 4 Russian Children Live Below Poverty Line, Official Data Says

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

More than a quarter of children in Russia live below the poverty line, double the national average across all age groups, according to official data.

As the number of Russians living in poverty grows amid declining real incomes, researchers say children are significantly more likely to experience economic hardship than other population segments. The United Nations named children as the largest poverty-stricken group in the world last year.

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Twenty-six percent of Russian children under the age of 18 lived on less than 10,000 rubles ($150) per month in 2017, the State Statistics Service (Rosstat) said. That's double the 13.2% of Russia's overall population, or 19.4 million people, who lived below the poverty line that year.

More than half of Russia's poor children live in families with three or more children, according to Rosstat's poverty report for the latest available period. Close to 45% of poor children live in rural Russia, versus more than 18% who live in towns and cities, Rosstat's report published last Wednesday said.

Economist Tatyana Maleva warned of a "poverty trap" that awaits these children in the future and forecast that data for 2018, which will be available in summer 2020, will not show an improvement.

"They will feel deprivation entrenched in them from childhood at every stage of their life," Maleva, the Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration's head of social analysis and forecasting, told the RBC news website Wednesday.

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