

Britain's War on Poverty

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Abstract

In 1999, one in four British children lived in poverty – the third highest child poverty rate among industrialized countries. Five years later, the child poverty rate in Britain had fallen by more than half in absolute terms. How did the British government accomplish this and what can the United States and other advanced industrialized countries learn from the British experience?

Jane Waldfogel offers a sharp analysis of the New Labour government's anti-poverty agenda, its dramatic early success and eventual stalled progress. Comparing Britain's anti-poverty initiative to U.S. welfare reform, the presentation shows how the policies of both countries have affected child poverty, living standards, and well-being in low-income families, and suggests next steps for future reforms.