According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 46.2 million people in the United States are in poverty. That's 15 percent of the population, or one out of six people. Dr. Ruby Payne is doing her part to fight this epidemic. She founded aha! Process Inc., a training and publishing company that offers resources, workshops and consulting to help educators, individuals and organizations build sustainable communities.

Payne discovered hidden economic class rules after working in the public school system for 30 years.

"We weren't developing the potential and achievement in students from poverty because the teachers didn't understand their environment, and we were losing many good teachers due to high frustration level," she says.

Her efforts have been extraordinarily successful.

"One study showed that 35 percent of adults in poverty that completed her course pursued additional training. Another case showed that 84 percent were employed or making money six months following course completion."

Payne's success can be attributed to her unique approach.

"We don't believe that adults in poverty are needy, deficient, and need to..."
be told what to do. We believe that individuals in poverty are problem solvers without the same resource base or knowledge as others.”

Thinking of getting involved?

Payne recommends building relationships, “They keep one alive.”

Continuously giving money isn’t the solution. It is better when both sides contribute something, even if it’s just time and effort.

“When one person is always the giver and the other’s always the taker, eventually both sides hate each other. Money gets one past survival but it doesn’t change thinking,” says Payne.

**Bonus PINK Link:** Read our profile on Jessica Flannery [here](http://littlepinkbook.com/little-pink-book/how-long-will-you-live-and-can-you-afford-it) another woman who’s made a difference in poverty.

Are you helping fight poverty? **Tell us** [here](http://littlepinkbook.com/comment/reply/3812#comment-form)!

By Sarah Grace Alexander

“If you desire to make a difference in the world, you must be different than the world.” Elaine Dalton

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