Fieldwork and research have been the most defining periods of my life. I met the most fascinating people, faced arduous circumstances, witnessed injustice, learned about the most creative coping mechanisms, became a member of families that remain dear to me until this day, and had a chance to share joy and sorrow with many genuine and wonderful people while in the field. The resulting life lessons are the most cherished and valuable experiences I have ever gained. The very process of understanding people’s lives embedded in different culture and living conditions made me understand my own personality and the society that surrounds us in the most profound way.

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I dedicate this book to my children, Verny and Sasha, who I hope will grow up in a more inclusive and just world.