

Preface

In 2012, I was searching for a new research project after reaching the final stage of my doctoral studies. My main research interest has always been NGOs. A conversation with Cambridge-based plant scientists introduced a new subject – the involvement of NGOs in the debates on genetically modified (GM) crops. As with most members of the general public, those who are not biologists, I had a passing knowledge of genetic manipulation and the first image, to be honest, that would pop up in my mind would have been Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. By the end of 2013, I had embarked on a new research project, enrolling in the University of Cambridge as Research Associate in Social and Biological Studies, which by no means should suggest that I am a biologist. In reality, there was neither monster nor crazy scientists but rather a lot of interviews, talks, observations and reflections.

This project has been a very exciting and unexpected journey. The process of research itself, which includes different interactions, deserves special attention. A second thread in the research has emerged: a study of what it takes to conduct research on GM crops. In the following chapters, I have included these episodes which tell my experience of studying the views of NGOs on GM crops.