

## **DAVID S. ROSS**

My trip to Sierra Leone surpassed my expectations in almost every way. I expected to see and learn about a different country and a different culture. I also expected to see first-hand the work that Search for Common Ground is engaged in West Africa. What I did not expect was to have a life-changing experience that fundamentally shifted the way I see the world, and to have fun at the same time. First, and perhaps most importantly, I could not imagine being in better, more knowledgeable hands than those of the Search for Common Ground employees who organized and ran the trip. I felt safe and taken care of every minute of every day. The breadth of experiences was staggering. I met with Parliamentarians running the current government, tribal leaders, army officers, radio and music personalities and, of course, the ordinary people of Sierra Leone, who were anything but ordinary. We spent time in the large cities and in the country, getting a full flavor and understanding of this fascinating and heroic country. My trip to Sierra Leone was, in every way, extraordinary. While making the decision to leave the safe routine of my family and professional life seemed difficult at the time, in retrospect, it should not have been. This trip was one of the highlights of my life, and I urge anybody remotely interested to find a way to make it happen.