

A LETTER FROM THE RIDGELINE

2025 Quarter Four

FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Our first months of operation did not unfold as planned. When The Ridgeline Collective began in earnest in July, our intention was to move slowly, test ideas, refine practices, and build teams. Instead, we faced strong opportunities in quick succession. Each demanded trust, collaboration, and focus. The slopes grew steeper and more quickly than expected.

What surprised me most was not the pace of the work, but the response. Experienced public health professionals stepped forward, eager to contribute, to think together, and to work in ways that prioritized learning, engagement, and integrity. Teams formed quickly. With each new height we paused, resisting the urge to rush so that we might take it in, reflect on what had happened, and ensure our reflections became plans or systems.

One insight resonated loudly: public health abounds in expertise, but it needs spaces where expertise can connect across perspectives with curiosity. Facilitation is what creates and holds those spaces. It fosters shared-sense making and amplifies expertise.

This insight has shaped our work. In the main part of this letter, we describe a recent example from our collaboration with the World Health Organization's Western Pacific Regional Office to redesign the STAR risk-profiling process.

The Ridgeline Collective is young. Much remains uncharted. We are clear, however, about the role we are here to play: to design and steward spaces where people can think collectively, learn from one another, and carry learning into practice and systems.

We look forward to continuing along this ridgeline, through its ups and downs, its shade and light. We hope to see you there, too.

—Matthew Myers Griffith, PhD

Risk Profiling and Facilitation in Practice

Our collaboration with the World Health Organization's Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) provided an opportunity to rethink two practices: risk profiling and Training of Trainers (ToT). This collaboration involved redesigning the Strategic Toolkit for Assessing Risks (STAR) implementation methodology and piloting that through a multi-day workshop. STAR is a risk-profiling tool, and WPRO combines it with an emergency workforce analysis exercise. We piloted the revised approach in Manila in December 2025.

Why this work mattered

STAR guides countries through multisectoral risk profiling. By identifying and prioritizing risks—from earthquakes to outbreaks to chemical spills—countries can plan and prepare more

effectively. Workshops often involve presentations and group work. They tend to prioritize completion of the tool over collective reasoning and shared sense-making. That approach can limit engagement, constrain discussion, and reduce shared ownership of outcomes.

What Ridgeline did

We prioritized engagement. We leveraged adult learning principles and participatory learning activities to help participants externalize their thinking for collective sense-making.



In addition to technical outputs, we emphasized facilitation. We explored facilitation as a practice, rotated facilitation roles among participants as STAR unfolded, and fostered reflection through “behind-the-scenes” sessions.

Who was in the room

Participants were public health, disaster management, and animal health professionals from the Philippine government and staff from WPRO and WHO Philippines. This diversity reflected the reality of multisectoral risk profiling and allowed perspectives, mandates, and experiences to be actively explored. WHO chose the participants for their potential to facilitate regional and sub-national STAR workshops.

What people said about it

Participants emphasized the value of practicing facilitation in real time and receiving feedback. Many said that stepping into facilitation roles helped demystify the risk profiling process and increased their confidence to adapt the methodology within their own contexts.

What this means for Training of Trainers

Training of Trainers and cascade training are often treated as the transfer of materials for exact replication. It rarely includes facilitation judgment and skills for adaptable implementation. We did not deliver slides. We supported participants to grasp the intent of the design, practice and reflect on facilitation choices in real time, and discuss how this approach translates across contexts. This approach built capability rather than replication. It trained trainers.

Learning alongside one another

The Ridgeline Collective invests in approaches that value practice, reflection, and relationship-building along with technical rigor. We see a need for facilitation that supports adaptation rather than prescription, and for capacity-building models shaped by those will carry them forward.

We are excited to walk this path alongside partners. We welcome conversation, collaboration, and reflection. If this resonates, let's connect.



THE RIDGELINE COLLECTIVE

Curiosity. Connection. Clarity.