

Faith Decontie is a First Nations, Algonquin and Nakoda-Sioux Social Anthropology PhD student from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Canada studying at Aberdeen University. Faith grew up on a First Nation Algonquin reserve where she had a community-based upbringing. Her studies and professional career are dedicated towards addressing Indigenous systematic governance challenges, service delivery barriers and discrepancies within the Canadian settler state. The research she is conducting aims to advance Indigenising policy practices as a means of connecting First Nations community-based perspectives to Canadian Federal authoritative decision making practices that directly impact First Nations reserves.

Indigenising policy practices is a methodology utilised by First Nations and Inuit leadership to address inequitable realities that Indigenous communities encounter which are legally recognised under the Indian Act and Inuit Land Claim Settlements. Faith's focus is on articulating how Canadian legislation has created on-going colonial policy barriers that current First Nations are working through to help address systemic issues by integrating First Nations ancestral governance methodologies.

At the beginning of her professional career, she worked within First Nations communities and later in the Canadian public service. As a Policy Analyst with Indigenous Services Canada and as a Strategic Analyst for Health Canada, Faith experienced the misalignments between objectives of the Canadian government and practical Indigenous community-based service delivery priorities. Her work experience within First Nations communities and with Canadian public service sectors has contributed to identifying where the needs are for improving communication among governing bodies and for those involved in community service delivery.



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Faith's research aims to explain how legal mandates and policy practices are instrumental for sustainable equitable outcomes. She encourages support for First Nations implementation of integrating ancestral cultural principles in daily systematic functions. She is interested in Indigenous 'game-changers' – those who dedicate their lives to serving their communities by mobilising policy and working towards an equitable society. Despite collective cultural difference, miscommunication and systemic gaps when

working with Canadian public service partnerships, her work specifically aims to develop a schematic navigation tool for those seeking to adapt policy practices to be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities and organisations.

Faith holds a BA in Anthropology, an honours bachelor degree in Directed Interdisciplinary Studies and a master's in Anthropology from Carleton University. Her master's dissertation was about 'Remembering Why We Sit at the Table', examining the historical development of healthcare systems for English-speaking First Nations in Québec. She

demonstrated how the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement led to a greater emphasis on Indigenous health and wellness practices in contrast to mainstream healthcare practices.

Faith has worked extensively with Indigenous community organisations, founding Sàgàsige ("appearing, as the sun from behind clouds" in Màmìwininimowin the Algonquin language), a consultancy company supporting equitable outcomes for Indigenous People through capacity building, enhancing policy development and supporting governance conflict resolution. Currently, her company is focused on supporting internal governance development and Indigenous community-based administrative implementation for equitable outcomes.