

# Invited and Forgotten: International Students in Crisis

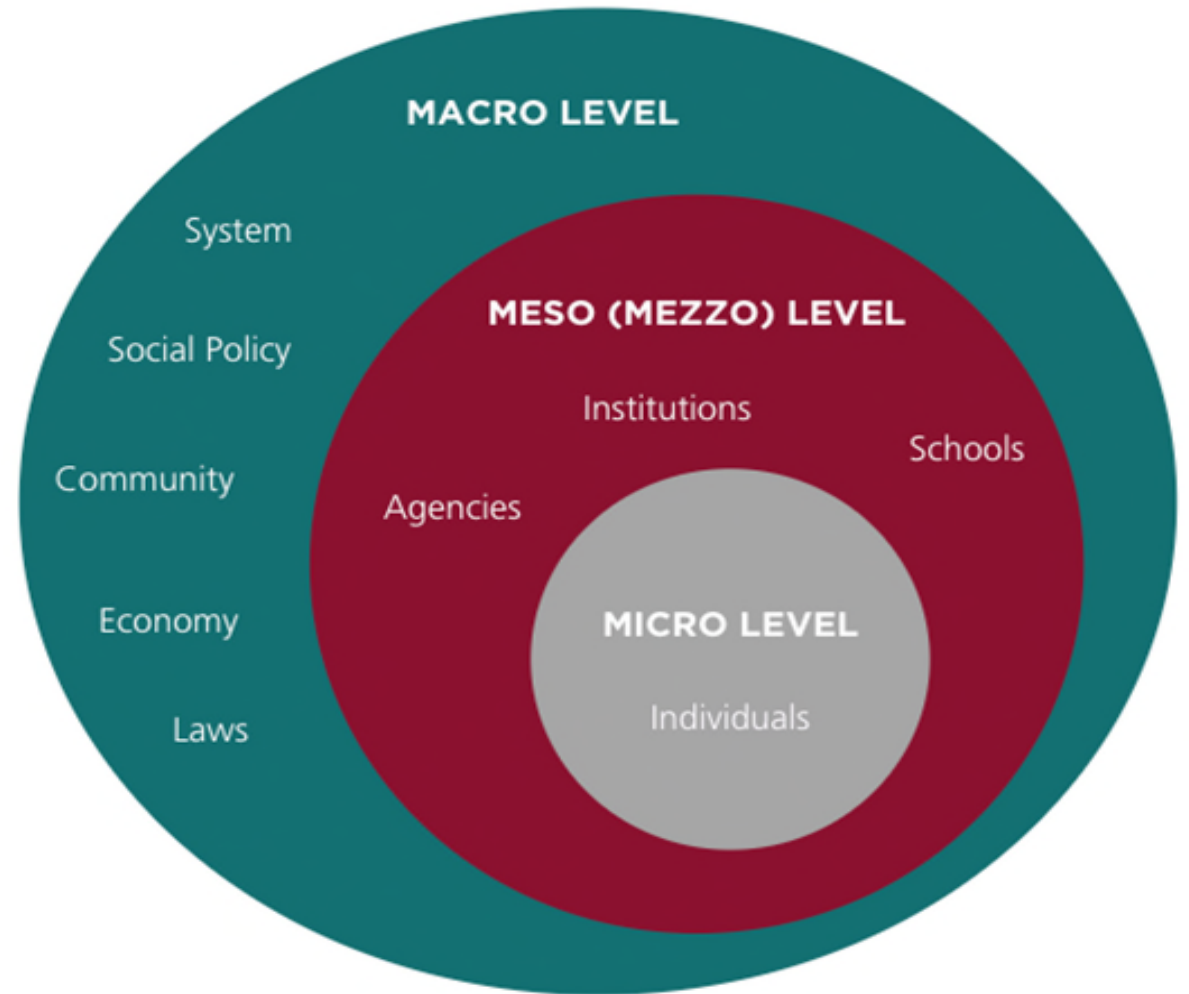
Roundtable/Nucleus Discussion

September 7, 2021



# Framing the Problem

- Invited and Forgotten: the scope of the ongoing International Student crisis in Canada



# 1. Labour Exploitation and Financial Difficulty

- Exorbitant tuition costs and immigration agent/consultant fees
- Insufficient resources to last the school year while in Canada
- Working under the table and getting paid less than minimum wage
- Uninsured employment and inadequate training can lead to extremely dangerous working conditions (e.g., in warehouses, trucking)
- Continuous pressure to support families back home
- Impact of COVID-19 for students relying on part-time jobs

## 2. Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

- Unrealistic expectations and general lack of awareness about struggles in Canada
- Debt bondage (from partner, friends, or employer) leads to sexual abuse and violence
- Exploitation by employers who demand sexual favours in exchange for paying the students' rent, food, or tuition
- Overall higher vulnerability due to financial constraints

### 3. Lack of Housing and Supports on Campus

- Overcrowded basement rentals and unaffordable accommodation, especially in major cities
- Exploitation by local landlords (often with connections to the students' village)
- Unaccredited private colleges end up scamming the students who end up without a proper degree or job
- Local colleges have granted diplomas without providing sufficient English language classes

## 4. Drug Trafficking and Legal Issues

- As their financial situation worsens, some students are forced into crimes such as drug trafficking, theft, burglary, carjacking, etc.
- Some students are promised cash jobs and used as drug mules
- Common cases include those of truck drivers crossing the Windsor-Detroit border
- CBSA has detained international students or work permit holders attempting to traffic drugs over the Canada/US border
- Difficulty in accessing interpreters or affording legal counsel

## 5. Mental Health, Addiction, and Suicide

- Lack of culturally appropriate counselling and support services on campus
- Social isolation, language barriers, discrimination, and culture shock
- High stress levels affect both physical and mental health
- Lack of awareness and stigma around sexual health education resulting in rise of unwanted pregnancies
- Debt bondage and precarious immigration status are often leading causes of suicide

# Next Steps

1. Do educational institutions acknowledge these issues?
2. How can we all work together to help solve this problem?
3. Consider writing a letter to IRCC and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities