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The Roots to Violence
Historical and contemporary faces of sex trading: Some environmental connections

Faces of my Caribbean
Last night I witnessed: A drive by shooting in the community
Two teenagers with faces of an angel, laid seriously injured, sprawled on the ground,
Lives in tatters, in the community
The night before I witnessed: A very young and frightened “lady of the night” selling her jewelled body, yet another round –
Experience of sexual grooming and victimization from as far back as she remembers –
on the street corner, in the community
Last week I witnessed: A woman and child in flight all forsaken, all alone, kicked out of a house, hardly dressed –
Fleeing, fighting and cussing and beatings, no love expressed –
in the middle of the night, in the community
I awoke this morning wondering if this were all a dream or reality.
Where do these images come from to torment my soul?
They are forever etched in my brain because I live in this community
This community is me and you, it must be told –
Violence no more, time for change and emotional prosperity
Let us put – forever – this violence on hold.
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Introduction
This chapter explores some of the interrelating factors implicated in transactional sexual abuse and the prostituting of children, both of which are manifestations of child sexual abuse (CSA). In this chapter
we use, sometimes interchangeably, the terms sex trading, transactional child sexual abuse and the prostitution of children; although these terms carry different connotations, all refer to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The chapter derives its theme from the first box in Figure 1.1, ‘A systems model for understanding the social drivers and determinants of abuse’. An environment in which abuse flourishes includes cultural sanctioning of sex trading, social acceptance of violence, consumerism (linked to sexual commoditization), poverty and community violence (see Figure 2.1). These topics, explored as contemporary realities, are set against a historical backdrop which is distinctly Caribbean and which provides the spawning ground and institutional structures that continue to influence values and behaviours to this day. These issues have been identified from research in the Eastern Caribbean (Jones and Trotman Jemmott 2009) as being crucial to tackling CSA. Such factors influence the perpetuation and impact of CSA in particular environments and periods and within particular relational interactions (in a space, a time, a community; in interactions between children and adults); they intersect in unobtrusive yet powerful ways. A systems approach can help us identify the interplay of harm factors and disrupt the various routes to the sexual harming of children.

A systems approach is used throughout this chapter in order to increase understandings of the connections and interrelationships between the constituent parts of child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. The sexually abusive behaviours of perpetrators

Figure 2.1  The environment in which abuse flourishes (cultural sanctioning of sex ‘trading’, social acceptance of violence, consumerism (linked to sexual commoditization), poverty and, community violence (see Figure 1.1 for the complete systems model)).