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Traditional courtship

for better understanding

The main lesson from traditional

practices is that past

generations have recognised the

importance of adolescence and

therefore the necessity of having

organised and socially approved

activities for counselling of

adolescents

Similarly, parents and society

today need so have appropriate

arrangements for the effective counselling of modern adolescents.

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Our aids against Aids are in

hating appropriately organised and supervised courtship

activities for adolescents.

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There is no doubt that well—organised and supervised courtship

dances have traditionally helped

the youth to have a sense of be

belonging and of being loved.

Their newly achieved sexual

energy has been utilised in socially approved activities which have

allowed young men and women to

meet and mix freely, openly and

in public.

In this way youth have

been helped avoid problems of

confusion. about sexual values,

unwanted pregnancy, promiscuity

and sexually transmitted diseases.

These socially organised court-

By MIKE MWANIKI

The UN Programme on Aids

(UNAIDS) in collaboration with

major pharmaceutical companies

has launched a pilot drug initiative

which aims at identifying strategies

Lo increase access to HIV-related

drugs in developing countries.

According lo a recent issue of

Health Horizons, the

HIV Drug Initiative has selected

Chile . Cote d’Ivoire, Uganda and

Vietnam to take part in the project the initiative the four

countries arc expected to adapt

their health infrastructures to ensure effective distribution and the

use of the drugs while participating pharmaceutical and diagnostic

companies will subsidize purchases of the appropriate drugs.

says Horizons-

In each participating country,

ship dances have also served to

minimise the negative aspects of

the generation gap between the

older and younger generations.

This difference is enhanced where the children acquire more academic education than their parents.

In all cases, the generation gap

reaches us peak when the children

become adolescents with puberty.

This is because the generation differences are tested lo the limit due to differences in the values held

by either generation,

Sonic of the solutions of the

generation gap include the harmonisation of the cultural values

of parents with those of their children. especially the adolescents

They also include the organisation, by parents. of appropriate so

two new entities will be created,

whose activities will be monitored

by UNAIDS. These area

CIA national aids drugs advisory

board, under the ministry for health . which will devise a co-ordinated national policy for the

provision of tise needed drugs.

U A non-profit company which

will act as a clearing house for

placing orders, say well as being a

recipient( and a channel for the

subsidies from the companies.

Financing for the intuitive will

come from pharmaceutical companies. subsidies, health ministries and UNAIDS.

Participating companies will

make available a range of aids related

drugs, including anti-retro

virals (new cocktail drugs). In addition. diagnostic companies will

provide virological services.

activities Lo enable children

and adolescents to meet members

of the opposite sex under valued

guidance. ‘today, parents them

selves need to learn continually

about adolescent development so

that they can then competently

help the young people in preparing for marriage Parent-c must

realize that adolescent courtship

relationships develop as a result of

natural sexuality changes and not

to anything else the

young persons might have done.

Everything they do as a result

of the changes is therefore a new

experience and causes many questions in their minds These questions muy be answered by parents

as they rise. If the parents do not

know the answers it is their responsibility to make appropriate

arrangements with professional

who can provide the

answers.

Parents can also help the young

people to perform drama on aids,

adolescent development, marriage and family development.

The various parts of the drama are

prepared and acted by the teen

agers themselves, In this way, the

adolescents become the most

educators among themselves. They are able to create effective communication ¡md close

whatever gaps there may be. Furthermore, they are able so integrate the messages into their own

cultural and emotional lives.

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Our against aids are in

helping young persons to

organize and perform drama

on aids, adolescent development, courtship values . and

ethics, marriage and family

development

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In communities, young girls

have been able to meet boys and

other girls at dances which have

been organised and supervised by

parents. On a chosen afternoon. a

drum would he beaten or a

would be blown. Children and

adults would then move on lo a

chosen field. The young boys and

girls would be decorated with

beads, feathers and other ornaments.

They would look forward to

dance with great anticipation of

meeting boys in the company of

many other girls and parents. As

soon as they got onto thy field, a

leader would sian them off by doing some dancing himself.

The boys and girls would then

arrange themselves lacing each

other. They would start dancing

while searching for mates. They

would use various signals to

the chosen male.

The parents would stay in the

background to watch over the

courtship dancing Some o the

parents would have idea be

as to who was likely to

be chosen by their children.

might have influenced the choices

according lo their own family aspirations to be approved by there

parents. .

In a village or community.

there would be several dances go-

¡ng on at the same time. Boys and

girls would be free to move from

one dance to the next to continue

their search for dances

would go on the whole afternoon

and into the night. If the search

was not successful it could be carried over and continued to the following year’s courtship season

This was necessary (tie boys who

were too young or too poor.

The choice of girl by a boy

naturally meant that he had to be

able to support her and have a

home before he could many her.

If parents approved the chosen

girl, they would usually build him

the first hut, Others were able to

get the co-operative help of their

friends in building one.

In older times in some communities, the songs expressed courtship relationships as culturally

guided values of the community.

especially those of production of

children. In these practices male-

female relationships were some

thing which happened naturally

and helped lo strengthen the social

kinships which were established.

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Our against aids are in

enabling adolescents to develop male- female relationships

guided by clear social value

Aids Education

Programme, P.O. Box 72454,

Nairobi.

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against

I A series by Prof. Joseph Mama Mungai

UN, firms launch

Aids drug initiative