At the celebration marking the completion of the first year Child-to-Child (CtC) pilot project in Beati Akor village in Tigray on Saturday, 6 June 2009, Gebre-Amlak Desta requested that the CtC project continues.

Gebre-Amlak Desta is among the 40 young CtC facilitators in Beati Akor village. This twelve-years old boy of grade six is one of the top students in his class. He stood second in grade six.

After his half-day schooling, Gebre-Amlak, like many other children in rural Ethiopia supports his family by looking after the cattle, fetching water and in other small household chores. To him helping his family has in no way deprived him from playing with his friends, his studies and his engagement in the CtC activities.

Gebre-Amlak plays football and other games with his friends daily. He often does his studies in the evening between 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

On Saturdays and Sundays morning, since the beginning of the CtC pilot project, Gebre-Amlak spends an hour each day with his five young learners. He has four boys and one girl in his group of young learners and says he looks forward being with them and enjoys the contact hours.

“My children,” said Gebre-Amlak, “they do listen to what I say and follow what I demonstrate. I do not have any problem teaching and playing with them. Further more, every Friday we discuss with our teachers what we are supposed to teach and play with them during the weekend. And every Monday we have a session with our teacher to share our experience and any difficulties encountered during the session. My children really enjoy coming to the learning session.”
Gebre-Amlak continued, “My children are able to count 1-20, to do simple addition and subtraction, to write their names and to identify characters as well as parts of their body.” According to Gebre-Amlak, many CtC young learners in Beati Akor have reached this level.

He also shared us the excitement and happiness of the young learners as well as the pleasure of the young facilitators not forgetting the gratitude of the parents and the communities to the CtC project.

Gebre-Amlak, on behalf of the young facilitators made a speech to the invited guests who gathered at the Beati Akor primary school compound to celebrate the event. In his remarkable speech of 6 June 2009, Gebre-Amlak thanked for all the necessary support extended to the CtC project and requested the CtC project to continue.

His request for the CtC project to continue so that no child in Beati Akor will be out of school received a warm support from the audience. Individuals who were moved and touched by his speech came to the stage to hug him, kiss him and to give him money as an expression of their happiness and support to the speech he made.

The gratitude and demand of Gebre-Amlak goes to all partners and donors who have made the CtC a reality. Beati Akor is a village that does not have an Early Childhood Development Center or Kindergarten Primary school students of Beati Akor in their welcoming chant have also expressed their gratefulness for the support extended and voiced their wishes that the CtC continues.

Gebre-Amlak has taken the young facilitator training programme in his school at Beati Akor and in Wukro for two and three days respectively. He has also participated in the evaluation of the CtC project conducted in Wukro town.

Gebre-Amlak, who has lost both his parents at his early age, is now living with his elder sister. He is the last and fourth child in the family. My family encourages me to do well at school. When I get an excellent result I am rewarded with prizes ranging from socks to full clothing, explained Gebre-Amlak.

Beati Akor is the first CtC pilot project village in Tigray region. It is about 20 to 23 kilometers from Wukro town. Wukro is the capital of the Kelete Awlalo wereda/districts, which is about 40 kilometers from Mekelle to North Eastern part of Tigray, on the way to Adigrat and Zalembessa.

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