



## Preparing to drive the roads of Africa

Before training on public roads with TTC in Durban, South Africa, Kevin, a Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM) 5C local leader who works in R&D, went over various points of caution on the road. There were of course the traffic rules and meanings of road signs in different countries, but it was the uniquely African situations that made a strong impression on the Drive Project members from Japan. For example, if a large tree branch is placed behind a stopped car, it means the same thing as the emergency warning safety triangle you put behind a car in Japan. Or, if you encounter an elephant while driving through a national park, you must not let the cars get too close together while trying to snap a photo. Instead, the cars following behind need to stay back even farther to open up space to get away if the need arises. When driving in cities, you need to keep

the doors locked and windows rolled up for security reasons. While digesting the differences with driving in Japan, the members' faces gradually took on more serious expressions.

## Driving in sugar cane fields

During the driving practice on public roads, the Japanese members uttered few words as they experienced distinctly African driving for the first time. TSAM instructors advised them to switch to four-wheel drive each time they went off the road. Not knowing just how bad the road conditions were going to be—or what was ahead—heightened their sense of apprehension. After switching places from the driver's seat to the back, Kitagawa of the CV vehicle Evaluation & Engineering Division looked relieved and talked about how it felt driving on the South African roads.

*"The roads always have a slope to them, so you have to pay attention and*

*maintain a firm grip on the steering wheel. The roads are also narrower than I thought they would be, and there are long stretches of road with small undulations. So I didn't even get a chance to look at the scenery on the first part of my drive." [laughter] "Now I know that we've got some pretty tough roads waiting for us."*

When the extended stretch of sugar cane fields finally ended, the team came upon four little monkeys grooming each other. They learned from other members that monkeys and wild pigs were a frequent sight in the area. The road had



been constructed without alterations to the topography of the land.

## Team-building and preparations in the name of communication

From Durban, South Africa, the team took a couple flights and landed at night at Kilimanjaro International Airport in Tanzania. Tour guides were standing around waiting for their parties, and there were a lot of Land Cruisers parked in the parking lot, perhaps to take visitors on safari tours. As the team was driving to their hotel, however, it became clear that the Land Cruisers were not just for safari travel. Despite being paved, the roads were littered with potholes, which was evident even in the absence of streetlights to light them up. Oncoming cars also approached at quite high speeds. Cars had to be tough to drive in this country.

The next day at Toyota Tanzania, the team checked over the brand new cars that they would be using in the Drive Project. As the team from Japan checked their supplies and the tires, oil and

lubricants, and lights together with the other team members from South Africa, Mauritius and Kenya, they gradually began to talk to each other. Even if their English wasn't that good, they all shared the language of cars. Tanaka from the IT Innovation Promotion Dept and Abbas Simkoko, a local member from Tanzania, were laughing and smiling during a break. The time allowed the team members to find out about the car awareness of the people they were going to be spending their time with, and at the same time to begin creating the team's foundation. Members don't just perform the tasks given to them, but jump in help out with other cars when they have a free moment. It's not only words but also actions that will make the team what it is. The Toyota Way is their shared language. The words "Anzen First" (anzen means safety in Japanese) were even written on the wall of Toyota Tanzania. Just on the short drive to the hotel, pedestrians suddenly jumped out into traffic, a motorcyclist rode the wrong way down the street, and a donkey was walking on the side of the road. Driving conditions were awaiting the team that they could truly only experience by coming to this land.

