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The well-meant Idea

The idea to develop a concept for a car that could be installed, repaired, and also mended with conventionally available materials as a totally simple modular solution all over the world, turned to reality at the beginning of the 1970s in the management of Volkswagen.

The development EA489 named "Basistransporter" went down in history of VW. A well-proven four-cylinder boxer engine from the VW Beetle was chosen, which already showed its performance for decades, which was technically advanced and could be also repaired with the simplest of means. The engine, sized at 1.584 cm³ and a performance of 50 hp, was now installed under the driver's cab on the front axle and was also powered by it. The driver's cab was constructed spartan and angular. The deeper meaning was that during repair works no especially produced parts were needed, and all parts could be produced and adjusted by means of simple tools. The parts should be simple as possible, as the idea behind this was

that no dealer network or repair facility was needed for the service and repair. A payload of 1.000 kg (2205 lbs) and a maximum speed of 85 km/h should be enough for the planned operation in developing countries. In summer 1973, the job was completed for the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg and VW reached an agreement with the countries Finland, Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey as buyers. The assembly was following in Mexico under the marketing name Hormiga – meaning ant in English – , in Turkey it was simply called EA 489, in Indonesia it was introduced under the name Mitra on the domestic market and from there it was also delivered to the Philippines, where it comes on the road as the so-called "Country Truck". In Finland it was produced by the VW-importer Wihuri.

The executive floor of VW had hoped for much more of the produced quantities. The production ended after around 2.600 pieces in the own plant between 1977 and 1979

and worldwide around 6.000 copies were produced.

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