

# **Iron Intensification Program in Nepal: An Overview**

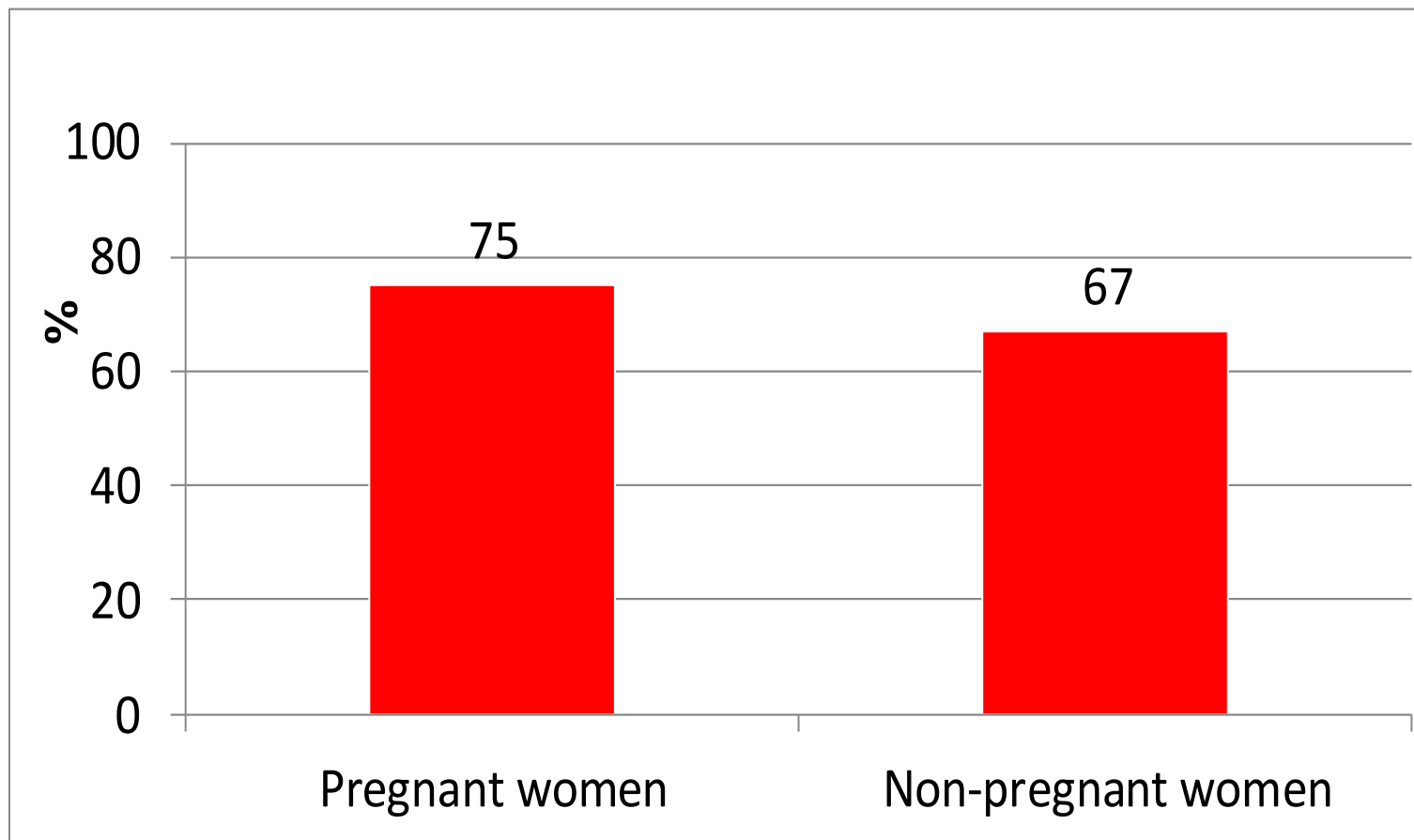
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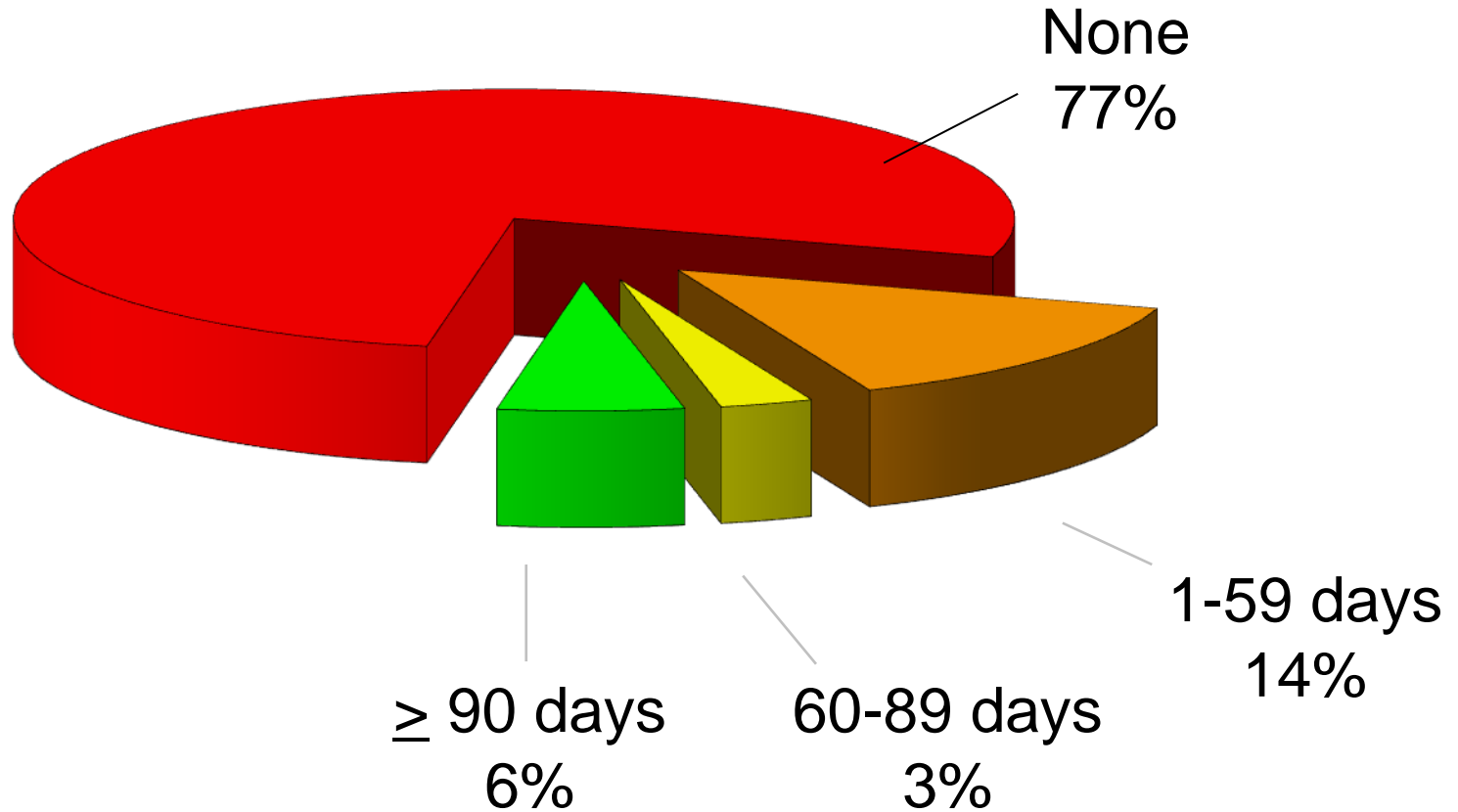
**<sup>3</sup> Micronutrient Initiative, Nepal**

# Anemia Among Nepali Women in 1998



Source: NMSS-1998

# Iron Folic Acid (IFA) Supplementation During Pregnancy in 2001



( NDHS 2001)

*Policy for IFA supplementation  
to pregnant women is there...  
Why is implementation so poor?*

# Main Problems

- **Lack of awareness about need for IFA supplementation during pregnancy and lactation**
- **IFA tablets not accessible to most women**

## Establishment of Community Based Delivery

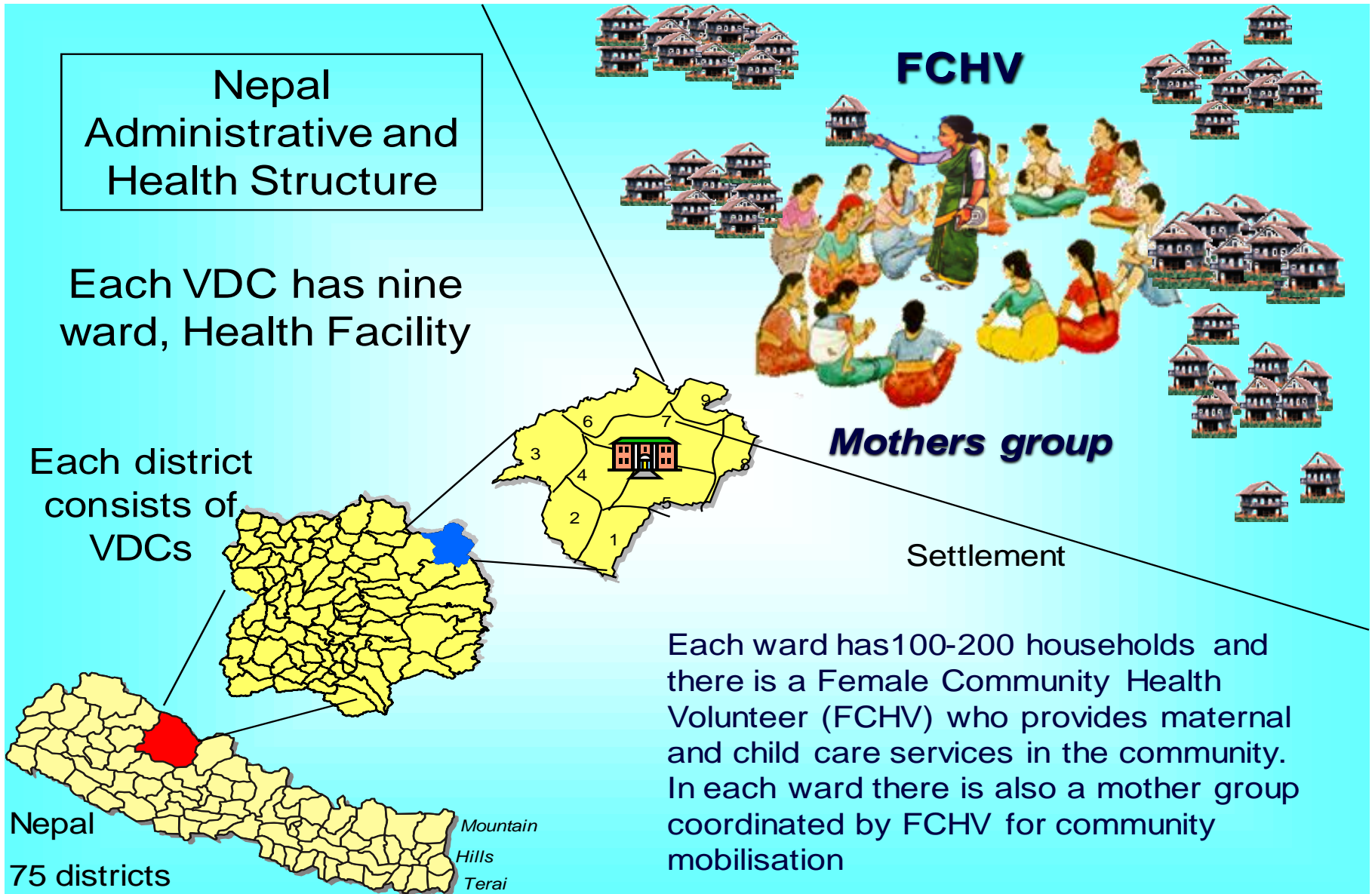
- In 2002, national strategy for anemia control formulated
  - Distribution of IFA through Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) in addition to health facilities included
- 2003, government launched first phase of Iron Intensification Program in five districts
  - Involved FCHVs also in distribution of IFA
- Program gradually expanded to 74 out of 75 districts by 2012
  - With support from MI (65 districts), UNICEF (7 districts), WHO (1 district) and Plan (1 district)

## Key Activities by FCHVs

- **Provide Iron/Folic Acid tablets to pregnant and lactating women**
  - In small plastic bottles
  - In blister packs since 2011
- **Encourage pregnant women to visit health facilities for taking deworming tablet and antenatal check ups**
- **Encourage pregnant women to take adequately iodized salt, one additional meal and rest during the day time**



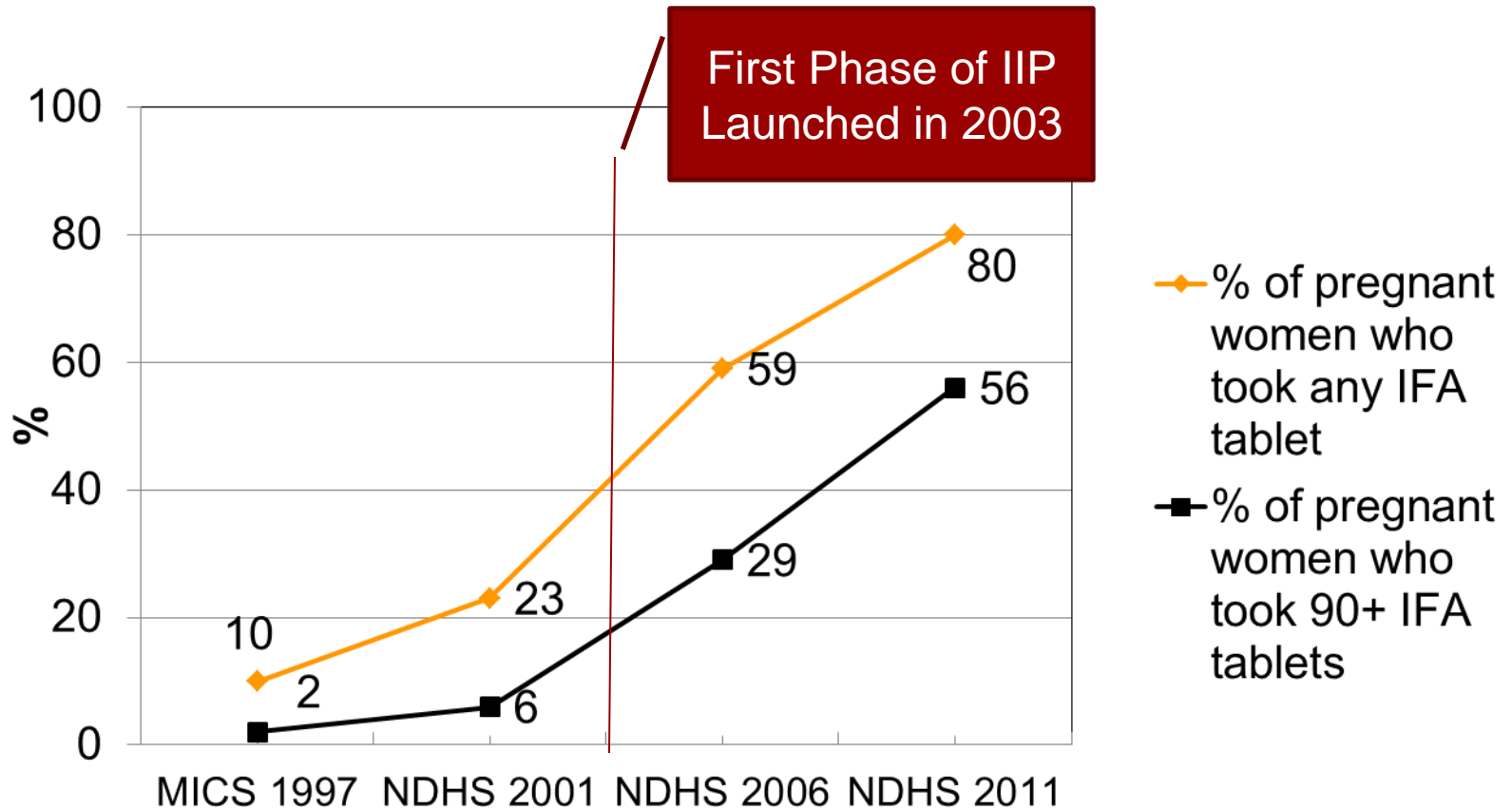
# Structure and Reach of the FCHV Network



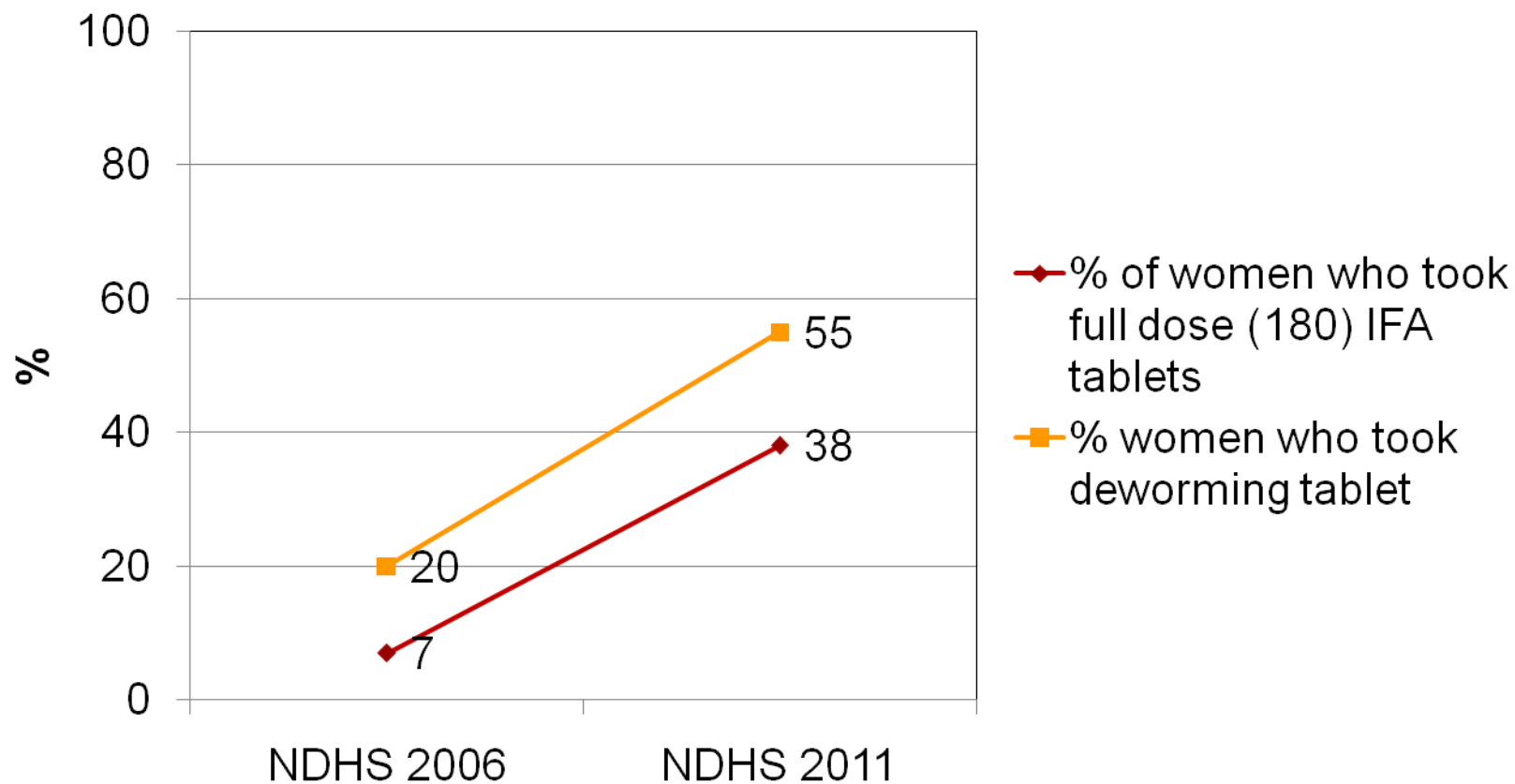


# Effectiveness of the Program

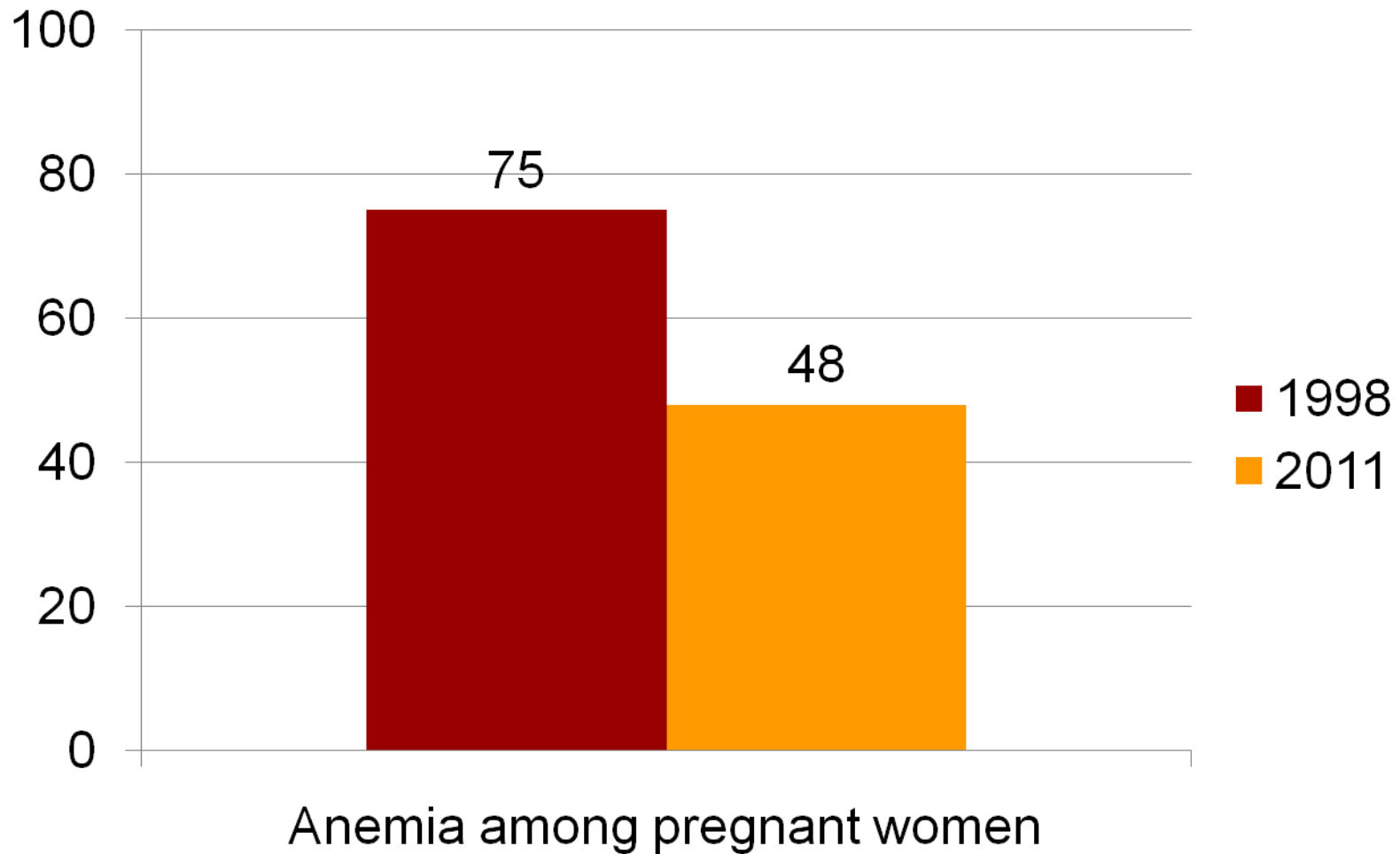
# IFA Supplementation during Pregnancy in Nepal



# Compliance of IFA Supplementation and Deworming Among Pregnant Women



# Anemia among pregnant women in 2011



## Key Challenges

- There are some hard-to-reach groups among which coverage and utilization of IFA tablets are still low
- Compliance has increased over the years but it needs further improvement
- Anemia among pregnant women reduced from 75% in 1998 to 48% in 2011 but it is very high

## Next Steps: Strengthening the Program

- Refresher workshops for health workers and FCHVs focusing hard-to-reach groups in low performing districts
  - Already complemented in 9 districts with support from MI
  - Government organizing in additional 10 districts

# Conclusions

- IFA supplementation among pregnant women has been significantly increased at national level in Nepal by
  - Bringing the supplements closer to the community
  - Enhancing interpersonal counseling skill of front line service providers
  - Improving product packaging
  - Ensuring regular supply of the supplements
- The Nepal program however needs further strengthening to increase coverage and utilization of IFA



**Special  
thanks to  
50,000  
Female  
Community  
Health  
Volunteers  
(FCHVs) of  
Nepal**

**Thank You**