

## Launch

Cúnamh was established in 1997 as a community led mental health project. The organisation emerged from the opportunity created in 1994 as a result of the IRA ceasefire and subsequent political and social developments. This created a new environment and space in which for the first time individuals could commence a process of reflection, exploration and personal growth. These new hidden opportunities allowed for new methods of personal and community development to take shape.

The rationale underpinning the development of the project was that the peace building process needed to cater for the emotional and psychological impact, which the conflict had upon people's health & well-being. No such service provision existed within republican/nationalist communities as a result of the prevailing mistrust of the statutory sector.

Cúnamh's emergence was also informed by the findings of two local research initiatives. 'Making A Start', BBDA 1995, reported that: "Death, imprisonment and permanently disrupted family life have at some stage affected every home in every street. It should be stressed that it is these neighbourhoods, which have witnessed some of the worst events of the Troubles. Events such as the Battle of the Bogside, Bloody Sunday and the Hunger Strikes have all left deep psychological scars both at the individual and community level". A Foyle Health Trust research analysis into the health & social care in the Brandywell Electoral Ward (Needs Assessment Report Project, 1996) recorded that 34% of respondents attributed their ill-health to the impact that the conflict had upon them.