Community-based tourism planning is about communication. As simple as it is. As Gunn (cited in Gatz & Jamal, 1995, p. 186) pointed out, „no one business or government establishment can operate in isolation“. This statement is dated back to 1988. Nevertheless, twenty eight years later we seem to be nowhere closer to achieve such a cooperation and a collaboration between stakeholders and other actors during the process of planning has appeared once again at the academic soil as a contemporary topic.

In the past decades, the business policy has been defined in terms such as constraints, choice and competition (Astley, 1984 cited in Gatz & Jamal, 1995, p. 188). But business and environment are very complex matters that, as mentioned above, can not be handled by a single organization or a stakeholder. Getz and Jamal (1995, p. 189) emphasized the need of this tendency to change: „When faced with complex problems that are beyond the capabilities of any one organization to solve singlehandedly, the strategic management process needs to incorporate the perspective of inter-organizational domains.“ Stakeholders shall realize their common interests and issues as well as the interdependency among them and work together upon it. Collaborative planning seems to be more promising in terms of sustainability than the competitive one.

I have found Grey's outline of the collaboration process mentioned in the article very important. To pull us back on the ground from all the excitement about collaboration, Grey emphasizes that, in the collaboration process, „stakeholders are independent; joint ownership of decisions is involved; the stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the ongoing direction of the domain“ (cited in Gatz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). As I try to focus on discovering the rules and tricks of the planning process, I read also the following paragraphs very carefully. Grey proposed a three-stage model for the collaboration process: problem-setting; direction-setting; implementation (cited in Gatz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). This system seems very logical; the real question would be who takes which part and who is responsible. I wish we get more inside in these questions during our studies and especially in a discussion.
about collaborative planning. We need to think about practice; who is or rather who should be present to which stage.

The definition of the model goes a little bit in a detail. The first stage is described as „identifying key stakeholders and issues“ (Gray, 1989, cited in Getz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). This detail is a little confusing because during our classes we have talked about how finding issues should be a collaborative process. In these days, a lot of municipalities are falling into troubles because they have spent a lot of energy and money on something that is not appreciated by citizens. I am aware there are different levels of planning but it is important to keep in mind to collaborate and not just to show.

The second stage is „identifying and sharing future collaborative interpretations; appreciating a sense of common purpose“ (Gray, 1989, cited in Getz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). I like the sound of ‘a sense of common purpose' especially when talking about collaborative planning. The purpose of a place is very often the first thing forgotten to taken care about. On the other hand, I don't quite understand what is ment by 'future collaborative interpretations'. But an answer to that I shall seek in Gray.

The third stage institutionalize „the shared meanings that emerge as the main develops“ (Gray, 1989, cited in Getz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). As said in the text, it might not be necessary regarding the issue (Getz & Jamal, 1995, p. 189). Nevertheless, it is the most difficult part of the process, no doubts. I see institutionalization as very tricky. In my opinion, as planners we must be very careful when setting direct and detailed rules and when just creating a framework. We can easily create too rigid environment unfriendly to collaborative planning. Rigid is not good to anyone. But the line is so thin that we have to learn a lot from other examples (that's why networking is so profitable) and constantly question and review our decisions and work. That might be very hard on our ego and confidence but on the other hand, in collaborative process everything is a collaborative decision so no personal failures. Furthermore, we learn by making mistakes and it is better to admit and fix a mistake than to insist on it. Both bring people to history books; it is only our decision on which side we want to stand.