

Biography

Ilan Chabay

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After earning his Ph.D. in chemical physics from the University of Chicago, Ilan's several careers included A) 12 years developing several novel molecular spectroscopic methods at US National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Stanford University's Chemistry Department, B) Serving as associate director of the Exploratorium science museum in San Francisco with its founder and director, Frank Oppenheimer, C) Founding and 18 years of running a social entrepreneurial company in Silicon Valley designing and building exhibitions for Disney, NASA, and 230 museums in 16 countries to inspire curiosity about our world and its rapidly changing conditions, D) Shifting to social science research on public learning and understanding of science for sustainability as Victor & Erna Hasselblad Professor of Sociology and Applied IT in two universities in Gothenburg, Sweden (2006-2011), E) Becoming Senior Fellow (2012-2015), Head of Strategic Research Programs (2016-2022), and Senior Investigator (2021-2022) of the Real Deal project of the European Commission at the Research Institute for Sustainability Helmholtz Centre Potsdam (RIFS) Germany (the former Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS) and F) Currently focusing on understanding, fostering, and supporting transitions to sustainable futures as integral parts of complex social-ecological systems in communities worldwide through the transdisciplinary synthesis of arts, humanities, and sciences. Since founding it in 2007, Ilan co-directs the knowledge, learning, and societal change alliance (KLASICA), which is an open international research network for understanding and catalyzing collective behaviour change to sustainable futures at the community scale across the world. In the past 15 years, Ilan and KLASICA colleagues have pioneered a growing field of study on roles of narratives in influencing collective behaviour change in complex social-ecological systems. Their focus is on narratives of social identity and future visions that motivate, influence, and support contextually enriched inclusive decision-making for adaptive cultures of sustainability.