HUMAN FUTURES

ISSUE #1
Human Stories of Covid19
from the UK & Sweden



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WELCOME

"The 3 most powerful words a reporter can say? 'I don't know'."

– Michele Weldon, award-winning journalist and Professor

You'll have seen plenty of them by now: the articles; think-pieces; grand pronouncements on what it all means and what the future is going to look like.

They're all fanciful of course. Not necessarily in what they predict, but in their confidence... surety... poise. The fact is that none of us know what the impact of this crisis will be on lives and industries. Or, perhaps more mundanely, what people will be buying and doing when we move past this. How will we remember life before Covid19? Should we expect the usual reaction to trauma – blocking it out and remoulding the memories until it's something more palatable we can all tell ourselves? It's clearly too soon to tell.

What we do know is that even at the best of times, there's an empathy gap that we try to bridge in research. And now, between experiences of this crisis around the UK and the world, that gap is expanding at an unpredictable and dizzying rate.

This magazine series is our attempt to bridge that gap as best we can. It's also a statement of community; a collaboration between One Minute to Midnight, AcumenFieldwork, and our agency partners across the world who will be contributing international perspectives. This month it's Beyond in Sweden, who show us what life is like in a country that has, to date, taken a markedly different approach.

And fundamentally, that's all this is. A collection of perspectives. We hope it shows the intimacy achievable in research work despite the barriers to physical closeness, but it's not here to try and 'define' things or present you with a silver bullet. It's a collection of human stories for you to empathise with, gently consider, and ultimately, find interesting.

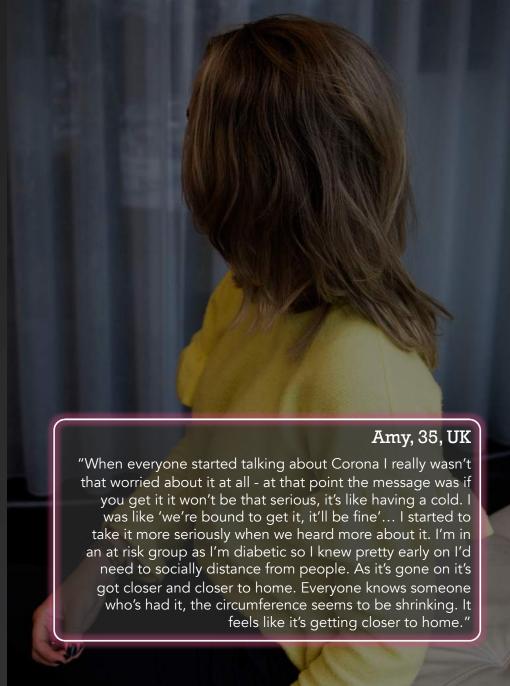
You'll find it's organised along 3 simple lines: PAST – reflections on life before; PRESENT – experiences typifying everyday life now; and FUTURE – what people around the world are looking ahead to. This last one is perhaps the most important, hence the reference to it in the series' title, Human Futures. Each month we'll return to our participants and chart how these 3 aspects are developing.

In the meantime, if you'd like to know more about us or any of the contributing agencies, or perhaps like us you'd just enjoy speaking to someone new for a change, please contact weallarrived@oneminutetomidnight.life



PAST

"I REALLY WASN'T WORRIED"



Tristan, 43, UK

"I teach snowboarding and I'm really missing my hobbies. My routine now is television on at 9am for the news which is a bit morbid. Walking the dog used to feel like a chore but now it's really exciting, the fun part of my day...

I had a sense that [a lockdown] was in the air. Almost a superstitious feeling that day that something would happen. We'd gone to the local pub on I think a Saturday, and it was so strange to go from watching the news in the house to doing it in a pub. We were trying to get away from the 24/7 ticker tape of it all, then it's on there too!

So the next day I did this mad dash to B&Q and got some wood and artificial grass, and built myself a snowboard ramp in the garden! There's the fitness side I'd missed, but also the adrenaline of it. It's an extreme sport I suppose isn't it?"

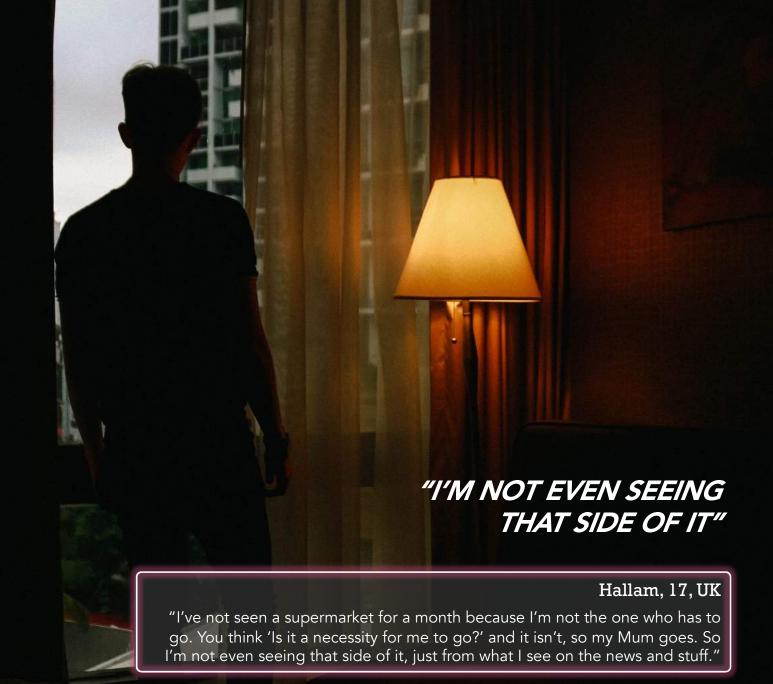


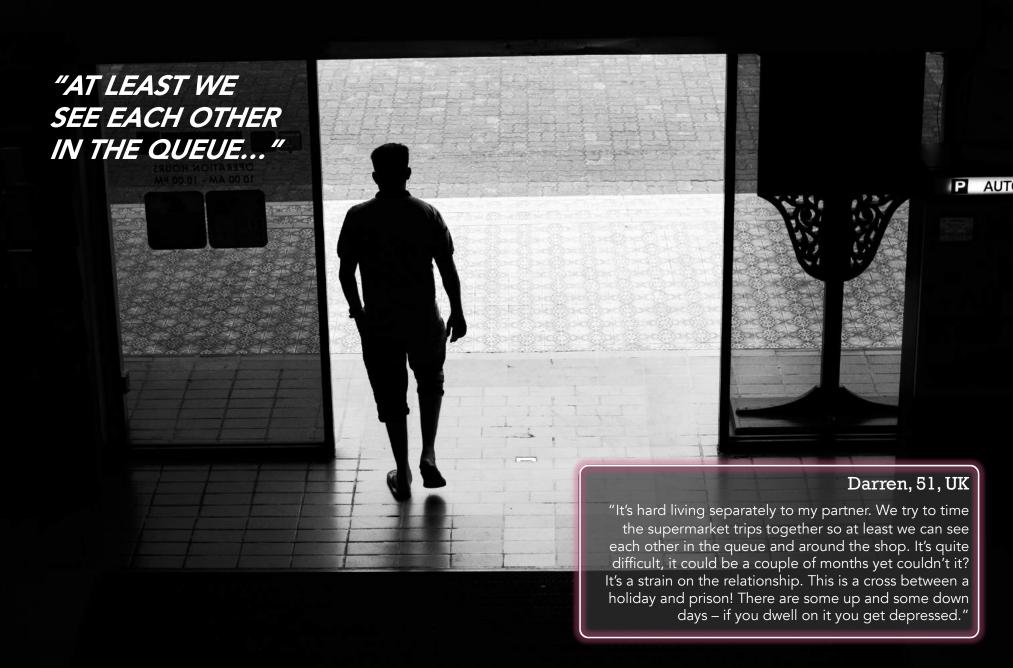
"I WANT TO GET A JOB I LOVE"

Joanna, 48, UK

"I've spent 5 years doing something I hate because it's convenient and flexible. I want to get a job I love."









"I NEVER HAD TO THINK AHEAD BEFORE"

Lidia, 29, UK

"For me the most challenging thing I'd say is getting over the fact that I can't work, as work and my career means a lot to me, it means everything to me, I've dedicated so much to it.

If I get over that for a minute, the other challenging thing is getting food in the house. I don't drive, so I walk into town which is a 15 minute walk to get to a major supermarket, so I'd go in, do my shop but obviously I can only carry 2 bags back. Sometimes I've gotten a taxi back, but I don't really like doing that. I wear a scarf over my mouth and nose, I pin it back into my hair with grips and wear gloves to take all the necessary precautions and then getting back in a taxi I think it's just another person I've been in contact with but you've just got to do it. Normally I would never really do a big shop, I'd live day by day to not cook too much to end up throwing it away. I've never had to think ahead before, I'm in the shop now and I need to think for the next 2 weeks - I used to think for the next few days."





"Everyone is so bored, so when we do chat there's nothing really to talk about either because nothing's been happening as no one's been able to do anything. Normally something might have happened at college that we would have used to talk about for hours, but now there's nothing to talk about."

"WE USED TO TALK FOR HOURS"

Hallam, 17, UK

"YOU CAN'T ASK WHAT THEY'VE DONE, YOU KNOW IT'S THE SAME AS YOU!" "The voice chat with friends hadn't been as bad before that day, but when you're all there together it's hard to have normal, separate conversations like you would in real life. It's run dry in the past week. The big difference is this is the first time where you can't really talk about the last time you saw each other. I'd usually be talking to friends or my girlfriend and now there are no conversation starters, you can't even ask what they've done that day because you know it's the same as you!"

"THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS THE SABBATH - WE CAN'T USE OUR PHONES OR WATCH TV" Gideon, 27, UK "I'm Jewish so the biggest challenge is the Sabbath, not being allowed to do anything Friday night and Saturday. Normally I'd be busy going to the Synagogue and seeing people but now we're stuck in and can't use our phones or watch TV. It's especially hard as it's summer time now, so longer days. It's just more of a lockdown... We now have a bit of a strategy in place to fill those days, we go out for walks and play Scrabble in the evening." **ONE MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT**

Maisie, 17, UK

"I think next year at college is going to be a lot tougher. It was going to be tough anyway, but I feel like they're going to have to go over all the topics we've had to teach ourselves, I don't think we'll go back this term. I don't think we'll be back until September. They're not going to be able to start September as they would have done, I think they're going to have to go over first year stuff, some people might not have done the work, or even understood it or understood it as much as they would have done."

Hallam, 17, UK

"I thought I was at the end of childhood, leaving school this year. I thought of it as the last real year of being helped, after this you're on your own. Then this happened. The most challenging bit is the lack of structure suddenly, there's nothing to get up for. I'm relying on myself to give my day some structure. I'm meant to be starting an apprenticeship..."



"I'M VERY MUCH ALONE"

Trevor, 38, UK

"Just my own freedom and happiness has become more important and knowing what I want or trying to know what I want – unfortunately I don't know what that is! For me personally wanting a partner has become more and more evident now I'm in an apartment by myself. I'm very much alone, it's become a lot more evident than before."



Darren, 51, UK

"It wasn't too bad going into lockdown, I was fine. Targets had all gone out the window, which from a work perspective meant the pressure was off because I'd spent January and February really worried with my team about how we were going to hit them.

I was looking forward to retiring, I'd almost started thinking of myself as 'semi-retired' which I wasn't, but I had one eye on it. It was something I was working towards, and then in the space of 2 weeks my shares in the business halved in value, and my pension pot was down £150,000. I've been through similar in 2008 - felt the business almost go bust - so I've seen it before, but it's demoralising. It makes me re-evaluate things."



"YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL FRUSTRATED AND ANNOYED, ANGRY, ALL THESE EMOTIONS"

Trevor, 38, UK

"Normality won't be normal for a long time. Like everyone you're going to feel frustrated and annoyed, angry, you'll have all these emotions, the government aren't doing enough but they're doing their best... you can only follow their guidelines but it's going to be hard to get to a normality as you're going from one extreme to the next. There's been 13,000, 14,000 deaths, there's going to be someone we know who will be affected by it, the economy is going to be affected. The environment we went into this won't be the same as when we come out of it, it's not going to be the same normal."



This experience hasn't been everyone's. With a drastically different strategy to ours, we wanted to hear more human stories behind the news reports and statistics coming from Sweden.

While life has changed dramatically in the UK and the feelings of anxiety have reflected that upheaval, Sweden has seen more subtle changes, and people's uncertainty and anxiety seems accordingly diminished.

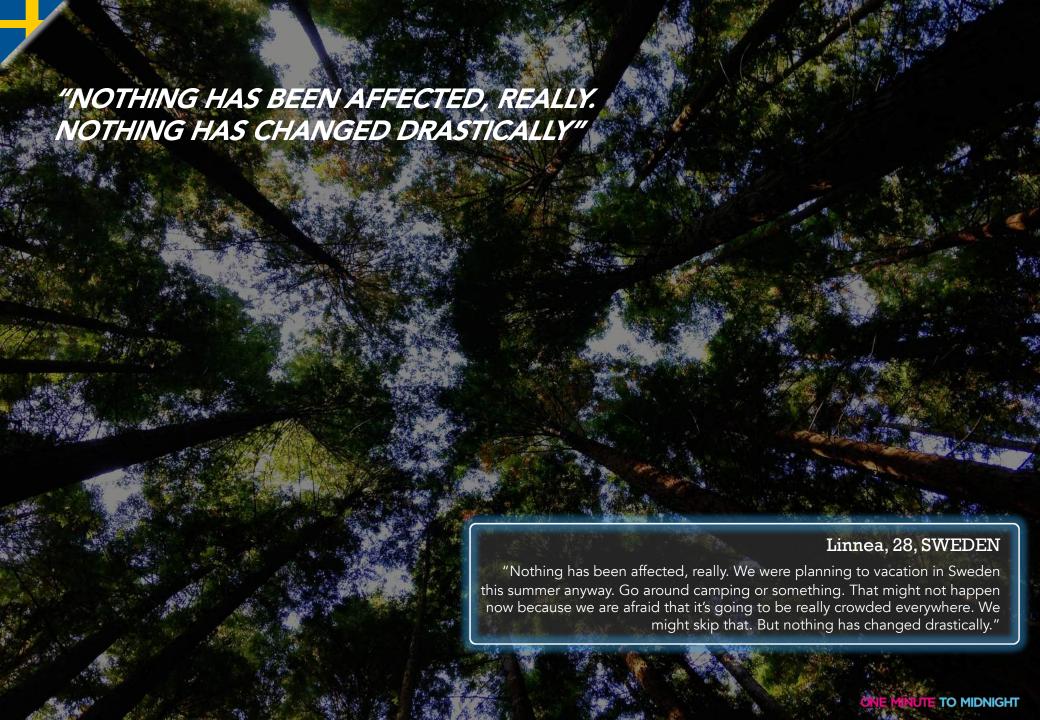
Here are a selection from our first global Human Futures partner, Beyond – you can reach them at info@beyondresearch.se

PAST

Matilda, 30, SWEDEN

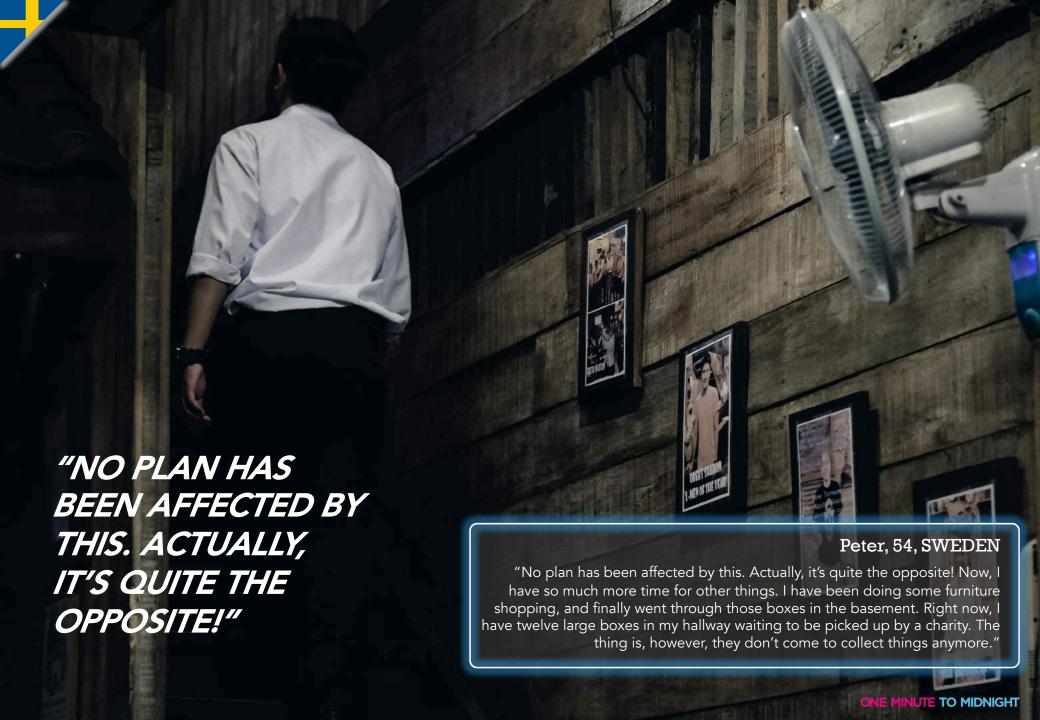
"Right before it happened, my new baby was two months old. He was born in January. My husband only went back to work for two weeks before he started working from home. My son and I were about to start a parenting group, had planned to visit museums, baby yoga, hang out with other friends on parental leave, and all these activities. I was so much looking forward to getting to know one another and get to learn how to be a parent. The first time usually is this crash course, when you have to take care of the baby yourself. Now, we still haven't learned how to be independent, my son and I. That's a real bummer. We might still go to a baby swimming class this week, because I think that's still happening?"





"THE DISTANCING IS THE SHIT FOR HER!" Jimmy, 39, SWEDEN "One positive thing we've noticed is that our oldest child who has Asperger's is actually thriving in this new school situation. The distancing is the shit for her! She isn't exposed to all the disturbing elements in school, and she can focus so much better at home. She loves that she can show her teachers what she's capable of."

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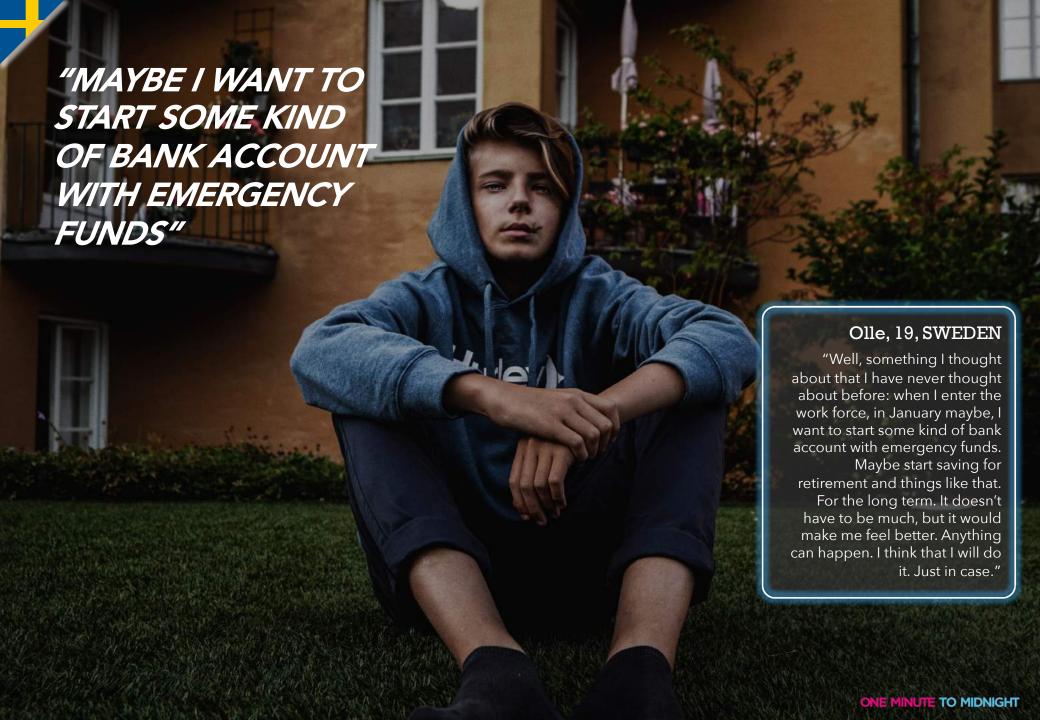


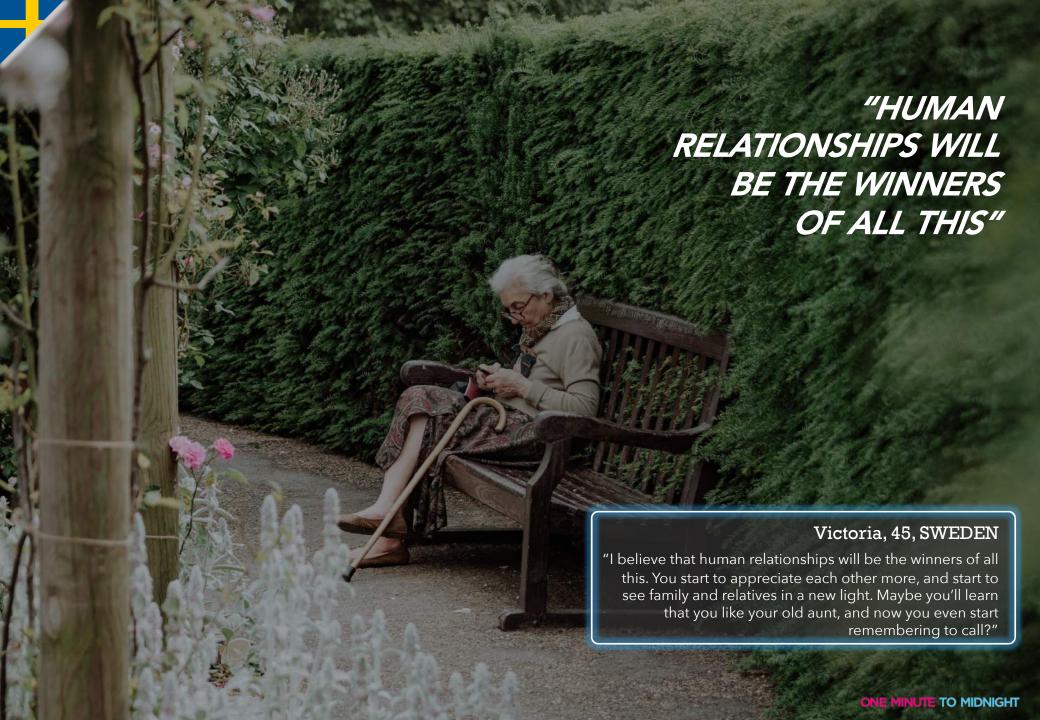














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