



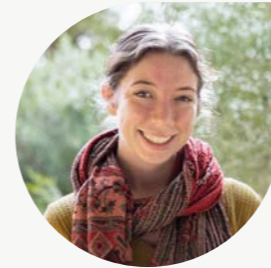
the inbetween-ness



of preparation



What does it feel like to prepare for intercultural work? Great question! Suzanne is getting ready to serve overseas, and here she explores what it feels like to live in the inbetween world of preparation.



Preparing for intercultural work is many things but very rarely boring! In a way, I've been doing it for the last 12 years, and yet new emotions, experiences and questions always find a way to appear.

I heard the call to mission when I was 16. On a Christian camp, I prayed a scary prayer. I said that my life was God's. If He told me what He wanted me to do with it, I would do it – no asterisk, no take-backs.

*Suzanne is a wonderful young woman preparing to serve with the team in the Silk Road Area. Her heart is to see K people transformed by the good news of Jesus.*

I'm 28 now. Each of those 12 years have been part of the preparation that eventually led me to Baptist Mission Australia and the Silk Road Area. And the preparation isn't finished yet!

Here's a snapshot of how I have felt while preparing:

### Balance and Patience

When you're preparing, you live in the land of inbetweens.

**Inbetween jobs and roles:** Balancing the responsibilities of finishing my work as a teacher in Australia well, *while* starting to transition into a host of new opportunities, tasks and things to learn on the Silk Road.

**Inbetween communities:** Finding ways to cherish and value the time I have left face-to-face with loved ones before I go, *while* building friendships and getting to know new team members and people from my future host community.

**Inbetween places:** Boxing and donating the parts of my house I won't bring with me, *while* checking Silk Road weather forecasts and imagining cycling to the bazaar.

It's in the inbetween that I'm learning patience when I'm itching to finally join the team. My timing is not the same as God's and He is under no obligation to keep to my schedule!

Preparing is a whirlwind, but so is intercultural work! Above all else, I feel thankful that it's a journey we never have to walk alone, but hand-in-hand with the God who calls us.

### Excitement and Grief

When you're preparing to serve interculturally, you're preparing to be welcomed into a range of new spaces and opportunities to share God's love. That's exciting!

I pray for and anticipate the friends I'll make, the adventures that await, and the feeling of finally reaching the destination and starting the new chapter!

The other side of the coin, though, is that I am keenly aware of how much I'll be saying goodbye to, even just for a few years.

My Bible study group, bushwalks, seeing the first class I taught graduate, family dinners, getting to hug a friend or sing Christmas carols in the town centre – these small blessings will be a lot further away next year.

So even as I feel excited, I am grieving a little too. Grief isn't a bad thing. It grows gratitude for all that God has given and trust in all He is yet to give.

**Suzanne is seeking individuals and churches to partner with her prayerfully and financially. Could this be you?**

[www.baptistmissionaustralia/Suzanne](http://www.baptistmissionaustralia/Suzanne)