

The Mobile Library of Leuven

Opportunities for neighbourhood –
based work in an urban context

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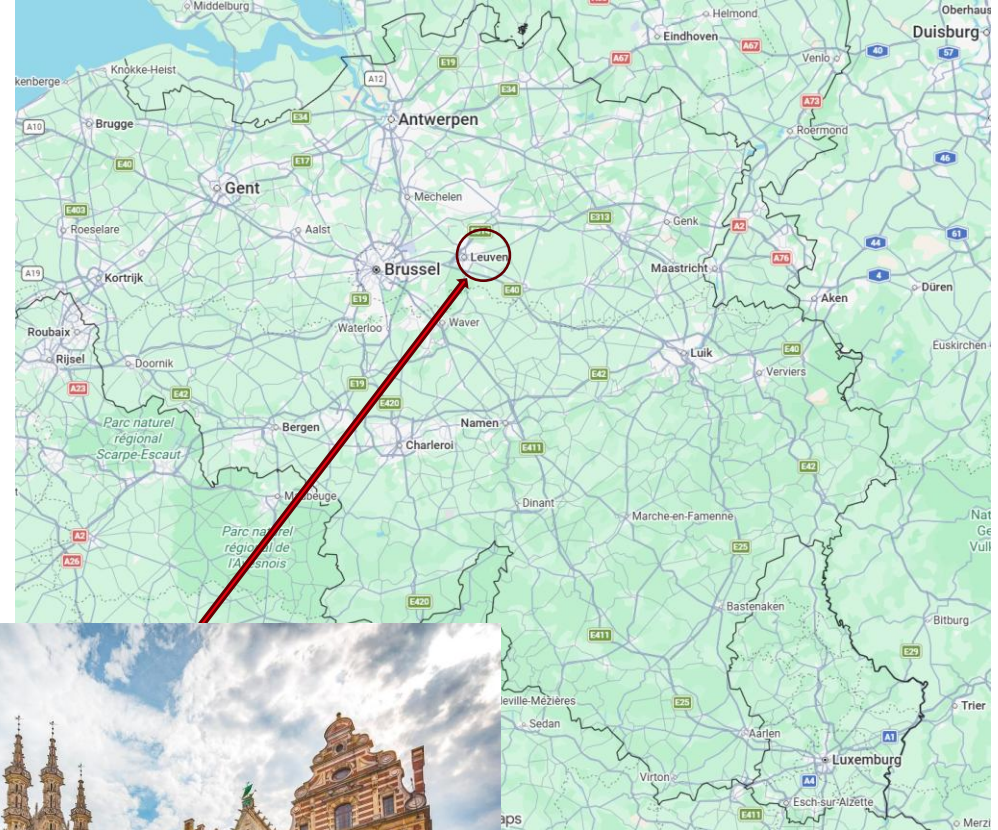
leuven



Leuven

Flanders, Belgium

- Capital of the province of Flemish Brabant
- 105,000 inhabitants, (+150 different nationalities)
- Home to KU Leuven University, founded in 1425 (+50.000 students)
- International student and research hub with a highly diverse population
- European Capital of Innovation (iCapital winner 2020)
- Rich historic center with vibrant cultural life
- European Capital of Culture 2030



The Public Library of Leuven

Our vision

The Public Library of Leuven (de Bib Leuven) is **always close by**, providing **access** to and **guiding** you toward information, literature, and culture.

We play a **social role in the city** and in the neighborhoods to make that real “third place” —a **living room in the city**—possible everywhere, even where you might least expect it.

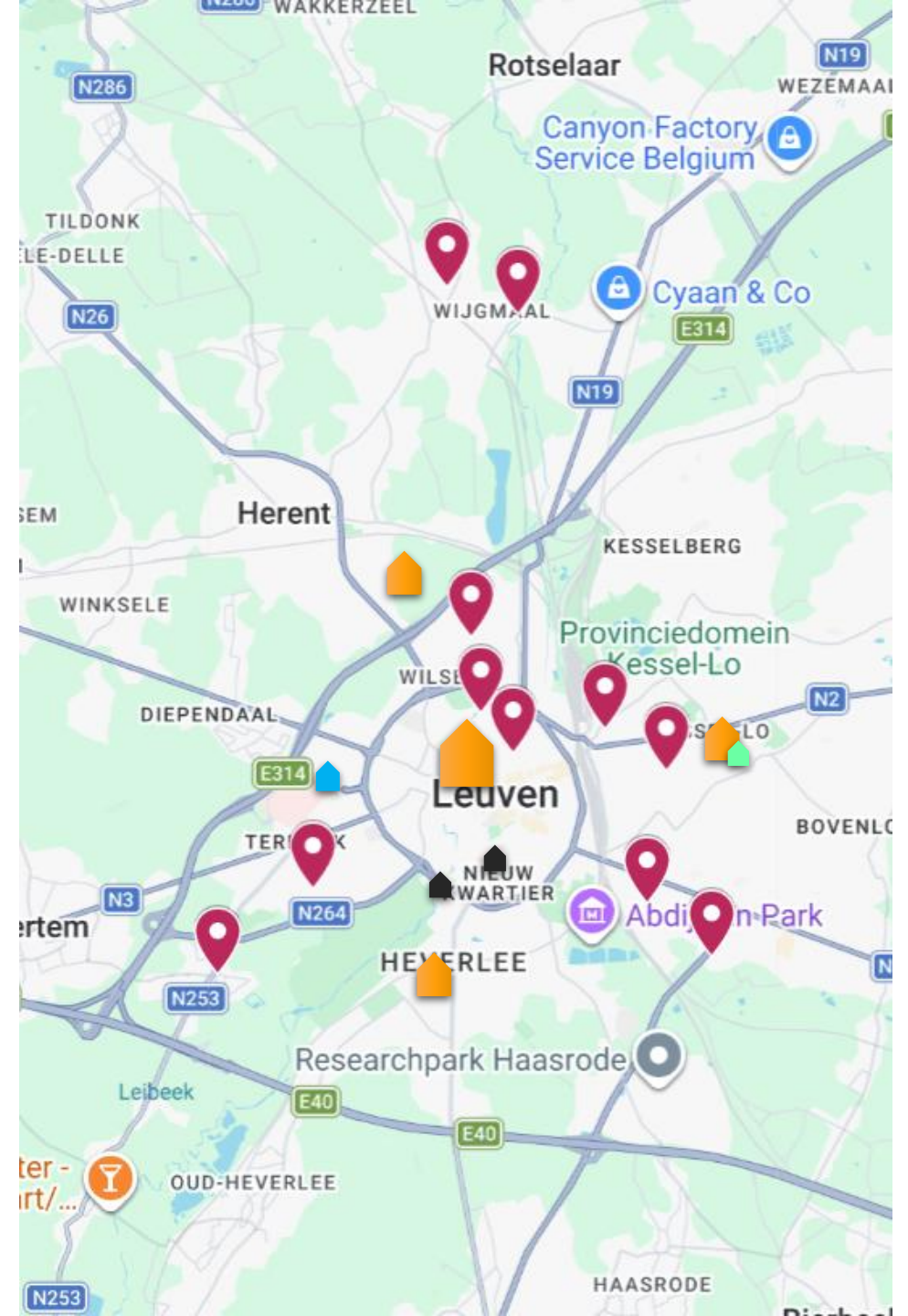
Our goal is **to encourage people** to meet one another, to read, watch, listen, share knowledge, think critically, and **build a society where opportunities are provided.**



The public library of Leuven

The library is always nearby

- In the city centre: **De Bib Leuven Tweebronnen** 🏠
- In the sub-municipalities: 🏠
 - **de Bib Leuven Kessel-Lo**
 - **de Bib Leuven Heverlee**
 - **de Bib Leuven Wilsele**
- de Bib Leuven Mobile Library - **Bibliobus** 📍
- **Spelothek**: toys for children and adults with special needs or care 🌱
- **Prison Libraries** (in the 2 prisons of Leuven) 🏠
- **Bib at home** service
- **Bib at University Hospital Campus** 🏠
(as public library mid 2027)



We are ... De Bib Leuven

With:

- 50 staff members, with passion for our library
- 150+ volunteers
- Library bus team: 8 staff members

Collection & members

- 27,584 active unique borrowers
- 1,238,784 loans from the physical collection and 65,703 loans from the digital collection
- 547,960 visitors over the past year

Welcome for:

- *Discovering*: contemporary physical and digital collection
- *Developing*: empowerment of talent and knowledge
- *Meeting (third place)*: people of allkind, partners, ...(cultural, social, ...), studying, working,
- *Relaxing*: experiencing culture, literature in the living room of the city





Don't say Library Bus say BIBLIOBUS

Some history: 1989 – 2005 -2025



Bibliobus of Leuven: The School Program

- Kindergartens – Primary school – Care groups of special education schools – Daycare
- 280 classes in 29 schools (& 6 daycares)
- We bring the public library to the school with an open mind, **focusing on the joy of reading.**
- Focus on borrowing books: **choosing** process, **interests**, class themes
- Also: storytime sessions, reading competition, visits of authors



Bibliobus of Leuven: The Neighbourhood Program

- 11 neighbourhood stops
Reduction of cultural, social and emotional thresholds
-> actively present in neighbourhoods with higher vulnerability indicators
- A visit every two weeks
 - Reducing barriers for a library visit
 - Come near by, no distance
- Close cooperation with community-based partners
- Goal: building trust and opening pathways to the broader library ecosystem
- Difficulties: administrative burden and financial consequences for some families







Bibliobus as a third place

A new library bus, new choices

Focus on:

- **Accessibility:** two entrances, a lift for people with reduced mobility, plenty of windows to create a sense of openness, ...
- **Low-threshold service:** selfscan, desk in the middle, tablet with catalogue, ...
- Welcoming to **experience & spend time:** soft materials and colors, reading area, digital book games, stage

Library collections:

- For children and adults
- Introductory collections
- Free reservation system





RESERVATIES









Bibliobus, a mobile library as a driving force for a sustainable society

- Sustainable choices as part of Leuven2030: climate-neutral citystrategy
- The perfect solution in an urban context
- Old mobile library: European project: to Ukraine to rebuild the access to books and cultural life (*together with Unesco and regional government of Flanders*)



LOV2030

An open invitation...

- Lov2030 = Leuven will be European Capital of Culture in 2030
- 3 themes: Human, Nature, Innovation
- Radical new connections and Culture for everyone in Leuven & beyond (Bibliobus!)
- Welcome to visit Leuven in 2030
- Idea's or proposals for European cultural projects or collaboration as mobile libraries?
Shoot!





Thank you!

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