

Congo Boy

Director: Rafiki Fariala

Countries of Origin: Central African Republic/France/

Democratic Republic of the Congo/Italy

Runtime: 1hr 31mins

Languages: Sango, French, Lingala, and Swahili with English

Congo Boy tells the story of Robert, a Congolese 17-year-old displaced by civil war to the Central African Republic. With his parents imprisoned over their immigration status, Robert is left to care for his four younger siblings while balancing school, odd jobs, and his dream of becoming a musician. Hiding his Congolese identity for fear of deportation, he turns to songwriting and performance as both an escape and an expression of hope during a time of extraordinary uncertainty.

Offering a deeply human perspective on the impact of conflict through the eyes of a teenager determined to build a better future, *Congo Boy* cleverly weaves together the personal, political, and socioeconomic forces that shape Robert's life. Immersing audiences in the realities of growing up without a sense of belonging, the film offers an intimate portrait of the refugee experience while celebrating the power of art, family, and ambition to sustain hope in the face of immense adversity.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Robert is a student, musician, brother, caregiver, and refugee. How do these different parts of his identity reveal about how political instability and displacement can affect young people differently?
2. How does conflict affect Robert's everyday life beyond the violence itself? Consider its impact on family, education, work, safety, and his dreams for the future.
3. What role does music play in Robert's life? How can art become a way to express identity, build community, imagine a different future, or respond to difficult circumstances?
4. Stories about refugees and countries experiencing conflict are often presented through the lens of news outlets, and social media. What is challenged, complicated, or in service of those representations when we experience Roberts' everyday life through cinema?



Director Profile:

Fariala Alolea Albert

Born 1997 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fariala Alolea Albert moved to the Central African Republic as a young child when his parents sought refuge due to the war. He recorded his first song "*Je Suis Élève*" in 2013, and when it became a hit he adopted his stage name Rafiki. In 2017, he

discovered filmmaking during a documentary course at the University of Bangui, and in 2022 he made his feature debut with the documentary *We, Students!* The film was selected for the Berlinale and won numerous awards in festivals, including two awards at Cinéma du Réel.