

The Life Ahead

The Life Ahead (Italian: ***La vita davanti a sé***) is a 2020 Italian drama film directed by Edoardo Ponti, from a screenplay by Ponti and Ugo Chiti. It is the third screen adaptation of the 1975 novel *The Life Before Us* by Romain Gary. It stars Sophia Loren, Ibrahima Gueye and Abril Zamora, and is set in Bari, Italy.

The film was preceded by *Madame Rosa*, a 1977 film based on the Gary novel, directed by Moshé Mizrahi and featuring Simone Signoret. Like the book, the first film version is set in Paris.^[1]

The Life Ahead was given a limited release on November 6, 2020, followed by digital streaming on Netflix on November 13.

Plot

Madam Rosa is a former prostitute and Jewish Holocaust survivor who provides a home in her apartment for the children of other "working women" in the port city of Bari, Apulia, Italy. After Momo, a 12-year-old, orphaned, Senegalese immigrant, robs her, Dr. Coen, the boy's foster guardian, who also happens to be Rosa's doctor, brings her stolen items back and makes the boy apologize. Coen offers Rosa money to take in the boy and look after him for a couple of months, and she reluctantly agrees.

Momo, who has been kicked out of school for stabbing a bully with a pencil, secretly sells drugs for a dealer in Bari, but Rosa also finds him work with Hamil, a kind Muslim shopkeeper. All of these adults try to guide the boy. Rosa's neighbor and friend Lola, a transgender prostitute, whose daughter Rosa looks after, helps Rosa as she begins to decline mentally. At times she is lucid while at others she is catatonic.

Rosa and Momo develop a deep bond, and after he becomes her only ward, he quits selling drugs. Although her health is declining, Rosa asks Momo to promise to keep her out of hospitals, of which she is terrified since being medically experimented as a child in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Momo agrees and promises, but Rosa is finally taken to the hospital after a particularly bad episode. Momo sneaks her out

The Life Ahead



Official poster

Directed by	Edoardo Ponti
Screenplay by	Edoardo Ponti Ugo Chiti
Based on	<i>The Life Before Us</i> by Romain Gary <i>Madame Rosa</i> by Moshé Mizrahi
Produced by	Carlo Degli Esposti Nicola Serra Regina K. Scully Jamie Wolf
Starring	Sophia Loren Ibrahim Gueye
Cinematography	Angus Hudson
Edited by	Jacopo Quadri
Music by	Gabriel Yared
Production companies	Palomar Impact Partners Artemis Rising

of the hospital at night and hides her in a basement storage room in her apartment building, where she feels safe. Momo stays there with Rosa, caring for her until she dies. Afterwards, Lola finally discovers their secret. The film ends with Rosa's funeral.

Cast

- [Sophia Loren](#) as Madame Rosa
- [Ibrahim Gueye](#) as Momo
- [Abril Zamora](#) as Lola
- [Renato Carpentieri](#) as Dr. Coen
- [Babak Karimi](#) as Hamil
- [Massimiliano Rossi](#) as drug dealer

	Another Chance Productions Foothills Productions
Distributed by	Netflix
Release dates	November 6, 2020 (United States) November 13, 2020 (Italy)
Running time	95 minutes
Country	Italy
Language	Italian

Production

In July 2019, it was announced that [Sophia Loren](#), [Ibrahaim Gueye](#), [Abril Zamora](#), [Renato Carpentieri](#) and [Babak Karimi](#) had joined the cast of the film, with [Edoardo Ponti](#) directing from a screenplay he wrote alongside [Ugo Chiti](#), based upon the novel *The Life Before Us* by [Romain Gary](#).^[2]

[Principal photography](#) began in July 2019 in [Bari](#), Italy.^[3]

Release

In February 2020, [Netflix](#) acquired worldwide distribution rights to the film.^[4] It was released in a [limited release](#) on November 6, 2020, followed by digital streaming on [Netflix](#) on November 13, 2020.^{[5][6]}

According to [Deadline](#), *The Life Ahead* became a streaming hit, peaking within Netflix's top ten in 37 countries.^[7]

Reception

Critical response

The Life Ahead holds a 92% approval rating on review aggregator website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), based on 89 reviews, with an average of 7.1/10. The site's critical consensus reads: "A classic example of how a talented actor can elevate somewhat standard material, *The Life Ahead* proves Sophia Loren's star power remains absolutely undimmed."^[8] On [Metacritic](#), the film holds a rating of 66 out of 100, based on 24 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".^[9]

In a three-starred review for *The Observer*, [Mark Kermode](#) said of Sophia Loren: "The 86-year-old star's expressive performance as a former sex worker caring for an orphaned child is the main draw in this sometimes formulaic tale directed by her son."^[10] P.J. Grisar of *The Forward* was critical in his review,

calling the film "treacly," "derivative," and "clichéd" when compared with the 1977 film *Madame Rosa*, its "nuanced and celebrated predecessor." He calls Loren's performance "sturdy" and Ponti's direction "capable," but describes *The Life Ahead* as a "wan exercise, free of humor or verve."^[11]

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Academy Awards</u>	April 25, 2021	<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren & Laura Pausini)	Nominated	^[12]
<u>AARP Movies for Grownups Awards</u>	April 25, 2021	<u>Best Actress</u>	<u>Sophia Loren</u>	Won	^[12]
		<u>Best Foreign Language Film</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	^[12]
		<u>Best Intergenerational Film</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	^[12]
<u>Alliance of Women Film Journalists Awards</u>	January 4, 2021	<u>Grand Dame Award For Defying Ageism</u>	Sophia Loren	Won	^[12]
<u>Black Reel Awards</u>	April 11, 2021	<u>Outstanding Foreign Film</u>	Edoardo Ponti	Nominated	^[13]
<u>Capri Hollywood International Film Festival</u>	January 4, 2021	<u>Best Actress</u>	Sophia Loren	Won	^[14]
		<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Won	^[14]
		<u>Best Adapted Screenplay</u>	Edoardo Ponti	Won	^[14]
<u>Critics' Choice Movie Awards</u>	March 07, 2021	<u>Best Foreign Language Film</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	^[15]
		<u>Best Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Nominated	^[15]
		<u>Best Young Performer</u>	Ibrahima Gueye	Nominated	^[15]
<u>David di Donatello</u>	May 11, 2021	<u>Best Actress in a Leading Role</u>	Sophia Loren	Won	^[16]
		<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Nominated	^[16]
<u>Georgia Film Critics Association Awards</u>	March 11, 2021	<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Nominated	^[17]
<u>GLAAD Media Awards</u>	April 8, 2021	<u>Outstanding Film – Limited Release</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	^[18]
<u>Golden Globe Awards</u>	February 28, 2021	<u>Best Foreign Language Film</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	^[19]
		<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Won	^[19]
<u>Hollywood Music in Media Awards</u>	January 27, 2021	<u>Best Original Song in a Feature Film</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Won	^[20]

		<u>Best Music Supervision – Film</u>	Bonnie Greenberg	Won	[21]
<u>Houston Film Critics Society Awards</u>	January 18, 2021	Best Original Song	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Nominated	[22]
<u>Motion Picture Sound Editors Awards</u>	April 16, 2021	<u>Outstanding Achievement in Sound Editing – Foreign Language Feature</u>	Maurizio Argentieri, Riccardo Righini and Mauro Eusepi	Nominated	[23]
<u>NAACP Image Awards</u>	March 27, 2021	Outstanding International Motion Picture	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Nominated	[24]
<u>San Diego Film Critics Society Awards</u>	January 11, 2021	<u>Best International Film</u>	<i>The Life Ahead</i>	Won	[25]
<u>Satellite Awards</u>	February 15, 2021	<u>Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama</u>	Sophia Loren	Nominated	[26]
		<u>Best Original Song</u>	"Io sì (Seen)" (Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi)	Won	[26]
		<u>Best Adapted Screenplay</u>	Edoardo Ponti	Nominated	[26]

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External links

- *The Life Ahead* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10627584/>) at IMDb
 - *The Life Ahead* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/81046378>) on Netflix
 - *The Life Ahead* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_life_ahead_2020) at Rotten Tomatoes
 - *The Life Ahead* (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/the-life-ahead>) at Metacritic
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