# EpiDEMExtended report

## Introduction

EpiDEMExtended is a model created to simulate the spread of a pandemic in a population at the variation of different parameters. The model is implemented in NetLogo and is an extension of epiDEM Basic, one of the library models that come pre-installed with NetLogo. EpiDEM Basic simulates a SIR (susceptible-infectious-recovered) epidemiologic model (once someone has recovered, he/she is completely immune from the disease) in which individuals move around randomly and infect each other when close enough. This base model allows to vary the size of the population, the probability of getting infected when close enough to an infected individual, the average time needed for recovery, the probability of recovering after that time (at each time unit following the end of the recovery time, the model keeps extracting a random number and checking whether it satisfies the probability. Only when it does the person has actually recovered). Regarding the output the model produces, three plots are generated: the cumulative infected and recovered (cumulative since it keeps track of everyone that ever got infected, even if now that someone has recovered), the number of infected and not infected in the population, the infection and recovery rates. It is also calculated an estimate of the basic reproduction number, R0, which is the number of people directly infected by a single individual inside a fully susceptible population. This number is rather important since if R0 > 1 then the disease tends to become a pandemic, if R0 < 1 then the disease tends to disappear.

EpiDEMExtended starts from here, adding various elements to the model and trying to simulate the spread of a specific recent disease, Covid-19, using real Italian data. In the next sections of this document these elements will be described, first in a high level, global way, and then more specifically regarding the implementation.

## High level model

EpiDEMExtended presents different types of agents who partake in the simulation:

* Activities -> immobile agents, comprising all various activities that individuals may do during the day, both dutiful (jobs, going to school) and recreational
* Houses -> immobile agents, each representing the home of a certain family
* People -> the individuals, (mostly) moving agents divided into age classes and grouped into families

Activities are furtherly divided in 4 sub-groups:

* Leisure activities -> all the recreational activities people will do after their duties. This includes parks, cinemas, restaurants etc. Note that each of these activities will also be a workplace for some people
* Education activities -> any teaching activity falls here. Schools and universities are part of this category. Again, note that for some people these activities will be their workplace
* Health activities -> hospitals, clinics, chemists’ and such are part of this category
* Professional activities -> all other work-related activities that are not part of the other groups (banks, post offices, factories etc.)

Activities are defined in files, specifying the kind of the activity (its description, basically), its productive value (economical importance of the activity) and its capability of smart working (how possible it would be to work from home).

Regarding individuals, they are separated into 7 age classes, each of them presenting a different behaviour and susceptibility to the virus. The considered age classes are the following:

* 0-4 -> modelled to remain constantly home (may still get infected through the other family members)
* 5-14 -> attend the type of education activity in the simulation denoted as “primary school”
* 15-19 -> attend the type of education-activity in the simulation denoted as “secondary school”
* 20-24 -> attend the type of education activity in the simulation denoted as “university”
* 25-39 -> young workers, to each of them is assigned as a job one of the activities
* 40-64 -> old workers, to each of them is assigned as a job one of the activities
* 65 and older -> elders, who do not work but only enjoy recreational activities

The percentage of each class can be specified from file.

As already stated, people are grouped into families. By family is meant a group of people (of appropriate age classes) living together in the same house. The grouping in families and subsequent house assignment is done following some rules. First of all, families have at most 4 people, of which at most 2 are sons (these two rules may not always hold, [more details](#_Houses_and_families) later in the implementation description). People aged 0-4, 5-14, 15-19 always live with two parents (0-4 with 25-39 parents, the rest with 40-64 parents), while 20-24 people may live with parents 40-64 or with a roommate (another 20-24) or alone. The remaining age classes may live with another person of the same age class or alone. All these possibilities can be made more or less probable defining from file percentages for them to happen, along with the probability for any individual of one of the “son” age classes to have a sibling in the same age class.

Now that a description of the parts of the model has been addressed, let us move to the behaviour of agents during the simulation. As already told, the only moving agents are people. The individuals (except 0-4 people, who, again, just stay home) move depending on a cycle appropriate for the age class they belong to, cycle that can be specified from file (being cycles completely configurable, the responsibility for them being actually appropriate is left to the user). These cycles are made of activities that people will follow for a certain duration (defined as well from file). It is also possible to introduce variability of the activity performed for a certain time slice ([more details](#peopleMovement) in the implementation part). The defined cycles won’t always be followed though: this due to the presence of a variable, modifiable at runtime, that simulates a quarantine with different levels of gravity that, consequently, may keep an increasing number of activities closed, forcing individuals who wanted to do them to change plans. This will not always happen: an individual may, with a probability of 5%, decide not to follow the law and move normally anyway.

Now, regarding the disease transmission, individuals can get infected due to closeness with a sick person or through “environmental” infection (if activated by the user). Going in order, the infection due to closeness happens with a certain probability that differs for each age class and situation the person is in. The susceptibility (probability of getting infected) of a person of a certain age class in a certain situation is obtained by the mean number of contacts that age class experiences in that situation divided by the total mean number of contacts for that age class (data regarding the contacts has been obtained from a Covid-19 related [study](http://www.quotidianosanita.it/allegati/allegato1389403.pdf) conducted by the Italian Comitato tecnico scientifico). The different situations considered are being at home, being at school, being at work, being at leisure and moving to any target (= being outside). Each of them has a respective susceptibility in the proper age classes (a student does not need a work susceptibility).

Moving to the other way of getting infected, by “environmental” infection is meant getting infected due to moving where an infected person has recently been, coming in contact with infected particles he left behind (by breathing, sneezing etc.). This happens only if the user wishes so, by activating a switch at any time before or during the simulation. There are two other related parameters that can be set: the infected particles decay time, since after a while those will evaporate, making passing through that particular point safe again, and the base environmental infection chance, the probability for a susceptible individual to become infected getting in contact with the infected particles. Note that this last probability is a base one, since it will be scaled down depending on how long the infected particles have been around (the “infectious strength” of the particles diminishes with time because of their evaporation).

About the outputs, some were added: five counters for the number of infected people in each situation (while at home, while at school, while at work, while at leisure, while moving, plus a sixth total number of infected people counter) and an estimate of the global productivity, that changes as the quarantine level does, due to some activities being kept close (it is also shown the percentage of closed activities).

Lastly, the graphical simulation employs different colours and shapes to distinguish the various agents:

* Circles are activities, that can be orange if leisure activities, yellow if education activities, cyan if health activities, blue if professional activities, while grey if activities currently closed due to quarantine
* Brown (slightly transparent) house-shaped agents are houses
* Person-shaped agents are white if susceptible, red if infected, green if recovered
* Patches (each of the squares composing the simulation grid) are coloured with shades of violet if environmentally infected (brighter = more infectious, darker = less infectious), otherwise remain black

Now that the model has been described at high level, let us move deeper into some implementational aspects.

## Activities

Implementationally speaking, each type of activity is a separate breed. These breeds all currently present the already mentioned attributes (kind, production-value, smart-working-capability). This is a bit redundant (a single activity breed could have been employed), but will allow, if necessary, to specify a particular attribute only for a certain type of activity (for example it may be of interest in the future to keep track of the daily income of certain activities and it would not make much sense for education activities to have such a counter).

As stated before, activities are read from file. In particular, there is a file per type/breed of activity (“leisure-activities.txt”, “education-activities.txt”, “health-activities.txt”, “professional-activities.txt”) in which is specified an activity per row. To perform the reading, each file is opened (and closed) two times: the first one to count the number of activities and the second to do the actual reading. This could be avoided by simply specifying at the top of the file the number of activities present, but being all this still at setup time and thus not influencing the speed of the simulation at runtime (and also not being too computationally heavy, at least for the current simulation size), it has been decided against doing so. Once read, activities are created and initialized, setting their attributes, proper colour and location. It is not allowed for two activities to be on the same patch.

Activities may suffer the establishment of the quarantine law and some of them might be kept closed, depending on the quarantine level (variable quarantine-level in the simulation). In particular, it has been decided that:

* quarantine-level = 0 -> everything normal, no quarantine has been declared
* quarantine-level = 1 -> schools and universities are closed, everything else still open
* quarantine-level = 2 -> most of the activities closed, only the professional activities with kind = “factory” (the ones with highest production-value) and the health activities with kind = “hospital” or kind = “clinic” are kept open
* quarantine-level = 3 -> only health activities with kind = “hospital” or kind = “clinic” remain open

All activities will need to have workers assigned to them and schools/universities will need their students. This will be done while creating people, so it will be discussed [in that section](#assignPeopleToActivities).

## People

People are represented by a single breed, the division into the different age classes is operated through an attribute (age-class) varying from 0 to 6 and indicating the classes in order (0 = 0-4 class, 6 = 65 and over class) and assigning to each class a percentage of the overall people, percentages that are taken from file (“ageClass%.txt”). Other important attributes of people are the susceptibilities per situation (home-risk, school-risk, work-risk, leisure-risk, transports-risk) and appropriate for the age class of the person (obtained by the file “riskPerAgeClass.txt”), the patch of their dutiful activity (school-patch, work-patch) if applicable, various booleans to keep track of the health state of the person and the patch of their home (home-patch), although this will be set later, when creating families (discussed in the next section).

The patches related to school and work are instead set now, at creation. The people of every age class are assigned to all activities to them available equally. For example people of age class 20-24, whose dutiful activity is going to university, will be equally split and assigned to all universities, while people of age classes 25-39 and 40-64, whose dutiful activity is working, will be equally split and assigned among all activities (it is assumed that every activity needs workers). This means that there must be coherence between number of people per age class and the number of activities that age class can be assigned to (or some activities will not be correctly visited).

The most important action people do during the simulation (along with infecting) is moving. As written previously, people move depending on cycles defined in a file (“activities-durations.txt”). In particular, each cycle can be made of any number of activities and every activity can have any (positive) duration one wishes. To specify a cycle in the file, this must be written one couple activity-duration per row, putting the couples in the preferred order and inside the proper age class section. The specifiable activities are “home”, “school”, “work”, “recreation”, corresponding respectively to the actions of people of going to their home-patch, going to their school-patch, going to their work-patch, going to the patch of a randomly determined leisure activity. It is also possible to introduce a degree of variability for a certain time slice. This can be done by defining an activity as composed by various (any number) activities separated by a hyphen (for example “school-recreation”). By doing so, the actual performed activity will be randomly chosen among them. Note that, as a side effect, this can be useful to make an activity be chosen more likely: by writing “school-school-school-recreation” the activity “school” will be chosen 75% of the times, while “recreation” only 25% of the times. Regarding the implementation, activities and durations are kept in separated lists different per age class (for example, activities-list-20-24 and durations-list-20-24) where at the same index will be found the components of a single couple activity-duration (at index 0 will be the first activity in the activities list and its duration in the durations list and so on). People access at the proper index of these lists, depending on at which point of the cycle they are, to determine their next target of movement. It is at this point that the hypothetical choice between various activities for that time slice is performed, guaranteeing variability even for the same person in different moments during the simulation. It is here as well that the quarantine presence may be handled, setting as next target a different one if the activity the person would have normally done has been closed or moving as usual if a randomly generated number satisfied the 5% probability of infringing the quarantine law.

Note that a single activities cycle is supposedly set as related to a single day, so the durations resemble this idea. Due to the fact that a single “duration unit” corresponds to a tick in the simulation and the fact that each movement of a person from a patch to the adjacent one requires a tick as well, the durations of activities may be disproportionally short compared to the time it took to get to them. If one wishes to avoid this, a boolean observer variable (more-realistic-activities-durations?) can be set, adjusting the durations to be preponderant with respect to the total average travelling time (see the function adjust-durations-lists).

## Houses and families

As said above, at the creation of each person his/her home-patch is not set. This is because it is necessary to have access to all people to be able to create families and then assign to each a house. The division of people into families happens following the [rules](#familiesRules) already stated before and depending on percentages defined in a file (“families%.txt”). To be precise, one can define from file:

* parents-25-39-percentage -> the percentage of 25-39 being parents (living with children)
* parents-40-64-percentage -> the percentage of 40-64 being parents (living with children)
* siblings-percentage -> determines the percentage of siblings in appropriate age classes (applied to those age classes living with parents)
* people-20-24-with-parents-percentage -> the percentage of 20-24 living with parents, contains the siblings too
* people-20-24-house-sharing-percentage -> the percentage of 20-24 living with another 20-24 (roommates)
* people-25-39-in-a-couple-percentage -> the percentage of 25-39 living in a couple, not necessarily parents
* people-40-64-in-a-couple-percentage -> the percentage of 40-64 living in a couple, not necessarily parents
* people-65-and-over-in-a-couple-percentage -> the percentage of 65 and over living in a couple

By applying these percentages to the correct age classes are obtained various pools (note that individuals of proper age classes living alone are obtainable by subtraction) from which one can extract individuals in order to create families.

A further explanation is though needed about when the rules defining families may not be followed. This may happen due to lack of people of a certain age class in a pool: a person 20-24 who should have received a roommate may not find any (because all other 20-24 were already assigned) or a person 15-19 may not find both parents 40-64 (because all the available ones were already set as parents of other individuals). This happens when there is no full coherence between the percentages of each age class (“ageClass%.txt”) and the ones describing each type of family (“families%.txt”) or simply because this model does not take into account all possible types of families (even using real data may in part result in this situation). When such a case happens, the person who could not form a family is assigned to an already existent one, which is why has been said that the rules regarding the maximum number of members per family being 4 and the maximum number of children per family being 2 may not always hold.

## Infection

Starting from the infection caused by closeness, it has been already said how this happens when a susceptible individual is clone enough to an infected one. Specifically, close enough means in the neighbouring patches of the infected individual (the 8 patches around his/her one) if both the sane and sick people are moving, while it means on the same patch of the infected individual if both people are not moving. Note that not moving implies being inside an activity patch (= doing an activity) and this would make the infected person, in a real-life scenario, most likely separated from people not doing that activity (he/she would probably be inside a building) or at least not really close (if he/she is inside a park then will not be near people outside of it). Hence an infected moving person only infects other moving people (= not doing an activity) in the neighbouring patches, while a not moving infected person only infects other not moving people (= doing the same activity as he/she is) in the same patch.

Furthermore, the chance of getting infected always depends on what the infected and susceptible couple is doing (again, they will be doing the same action if in the first place the simulation got to check whether the susceptible individual will be infected): if moving the infection chance is the transports-risk of the susceptible person, otherwise the proper risk of the susceptible person will be selected (home-risk if at home, school-risk if at school, work-risk if at work, leisure-risk if at leisure).

Moving to the environmental infection, an infected person can infect the patch he currently is on (patches have a boolean called patch-infected? to keep track of this) only if moving (same reason as before, if not moving he/she is inside an activity patch and will infect only people in the same state due to closeness). When a patch gets infected any susceptible person passing through that will have a chance of getting infected as well. This chance varies depending on how long the patch has been infected for. In particular, each patch also has a variable called patch-infection-time-left, that is set to patch-infection-decay-time (how long a patch will be infected for) as soon as the patch gets infected. This is used to scale down the base infection chance (called base-patch-infection-chance) by a factor equal to patch-infection-time-left / patch-infection-decay-time, making the infection more likely if the patch has just been infected. Both base-patch-infection-chance and patch-infection-decay-time can be set by the user before or during the simulation.

The spreading speed of the infection is extremely high (even without the environmental component) with the currently set susceptibilities, to the point that the quarantine effects are hardly visible. This happens since the majority of people is infected during the execution of the first activity of their first activities cycle in the simulation and the quarantine effects are enforced only from the next activity determination after the quarantine-level variable has been changed. So, to make the effects of the quarantine more noticeable, one can vary the frequency at which people infect other people around them (this does not currently hold for environmental infection, if activated). This can be done by modifying the variable infect-each-n-ticks (normally set to 1) so that, as the name says, infected people will only try to infect each specified number of ticks passed, slowing down the infection spread and making more visible in the outputs the presence of the quarantine.

## Outputs

Regarding the added outputs, the counters of how many people were infected in each situation are easily obtained: people have a boolean per situation that is set to true if infected in that situation so all that is left to output every counter is just to count the number of people with the corresponding boolean set to true.

About the productivity-related outputs, instead, the global productivity is calculated keeping in mind the effect of the quarantine. The productivity for open activities is their production-value, while for closed activities it is the product of the production-value and the smart-working-capability. Since the smart-working-capability is a normalized value, this results in scaling the productivity of closed activities depending on how well those can be executed from home. The global productivity is obtained as the sum of the productivities of open and closed activities.

Finally, to find the number of closed activities it is sufficient to count the ones whose colour is grey.