

As shown in the preceding chart,<sup>8</sup> the largest number of the bodies receiving financial support from foundations are religious organisations (32%), with educational institutions in second place (15%). This indicates that the role of foundations can also be political. As Stanley N. Katz notes in his studies on the role of mega-Foundations, the intervention of such bodies, and the unequal distribution of wealth in parallel to state policy (for instance in public education), could become a threat to democracy.<sup>9</sup>

### **The three periods of benefaction**

**I**ndividual and foundational benefaction are both supported by the common ideology of euergetism, adapted to the historical conditions of the times. The changing elements are the type of tools used to enable the practice of benefaction and its specific historical functionality.

The history of Neo-Hellenic benefaction can be divided into three periods.

- The first period, that of proto-benefaction, refers to the era before the founding of the modern Greek state or to areas that had not yet been integrated into Greece. The qualitative characteristics of this period of benefaction express Enlightenment ideology and the logic of the bourgeois transformation of society (schools, music halls, etc), as well as extensions of the traditional community-social solidarity (churches, roads, fountains, etc). The benefactor functions individually and benefaction is performed on a local scale, i.e. in the place of origin or the benefactor's residential community abroad. Examples of this include the Evangelical School of Smyrna (1733), and the Kaplaneios School in Ioannina (1806, 1821).
- The second period, that of modern benefaction, is related to the formation and expansion of the Neo-Hellenic state, as dominated by the bourgeois transformation of society, the transition to modernity and the establishment of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The benefactor functions individually, but the scale and quality of

the benefaction are evolving. The national centre is now the main focus of benefaction. Great and national benefactors such as Dobilis, Averof, Tositsas, Stournaris, Benakis and many others provide eloquent examples of this golden era of modern Neo-Hellenic benefaction.

- In the third period, that of contemporary benefaction, foundational benefaction dominates, characterised by the Onassis Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Latsis Foundation, the Vardinoyannis Foundation, etc. Foundations operate within a globalised framework, maintaining the existing social system and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie on an ecumenical scale.

In all three periods Greek benefactors have played an active role in the shaping and evolution of the Hellenic social formation.