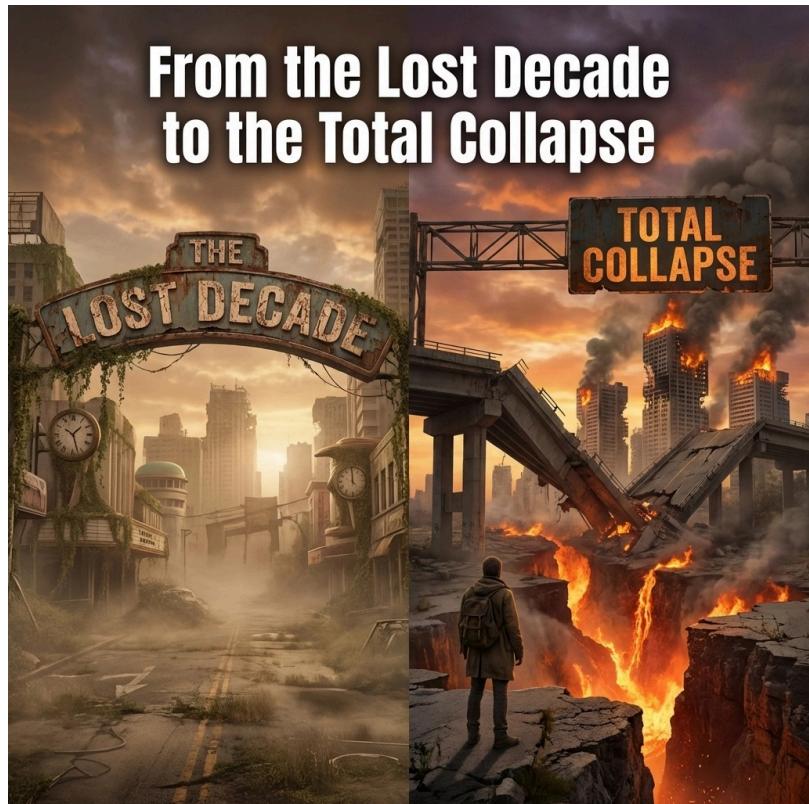


From the Lost Decade to the Total Collapse



Remember when the BLP came into power in 2018 and couldn't stop talking about "the lost decade"? Every speech, every press conference, every rally, they made sure we knew that the DLP had supposedly run this country into the ground from 2008 to 2018. Ten years of mismanagement, they said. Ten years of stagnation. Ten years of going nowhere.

And you know what? A lot of us believed it. We were tired. We wanted change. We voted for hope.

But here we are in 2026, seven years into this "new era," and we need to ask ourselves a very serious question: If 2008 to 2018 was the lost decade, then what exactly do we call what's happening right now?

Because from where most of us are standing, trying to stretch a dollar that doesn't stretch anymore, watching our roads fall apart, and wondering if we can even afford to send our children to "free" school, this feels like something far worse.

This feels like a total collapse.

The Lost Decade: What Were We Actually Losing?

Let's be fair here. The years between 2008 and 2018 weren't easy. The global financial crisis hit hard, and Barbados felt it. Tourism slowed down, the economy tightened, and yes, things were rough.

But think back to those days for a moment.

When you went to QEH, did you have to bring your own bandages? When your child went to primary school, did you get a letter asking you to pay fees? Were the buses running? Could you drive down your road without dodging craters?

The DLP administration had its problems: nobody is saying otherwise. But during those "lost" years, the social safety net was still there. Healthcare was struggling but functioning. Education was still free in more than just name. The Transport Board was actually transporting people.



So what exactly were we losing? And more importantly, what have we found since 2018?

2018 to Present: The Total Collapse

Fast forward to today, and let's take a real look around.

The QEH Crisis

Our main hospital: the Queen Elizabeth Hospital: is in a state that should make every single one of us angry. We're not talking about long wait times or outdated equipment. We're talking about basic supplies running out. We're talking about family members having to bring their own sheets, their own medication, their own everything just to get care.

This is the flagship of our healthcare system. This is where we go when things get serious. And it's falling apart right in front of our eyes.

How did we get here? Where did the money go?

Education: "Free" in Name Only

Remember when education in Barbados was the pride of the Caribbean? Remember when we could hold our heads high and say that every child, regardless of their parents' bank account, could get a quality education?

Now parents are getting letters. Letters asking them to contribute to school fees. At primary schools. At secondary schools. Schools that are supposed to be free.

Let that sink in for a moment.

We fought for free education. Our grandparents and great-grandparents made sacrifices so that every Bajan child could learn without their family going broke. And now, quietly, without any big announcement, that promise is being chipped away.



The Roads: A National Embarrassment

Drive anywhere in Barbados right now. Go ahead. Try to find a stretch of road that doesn't have potholes deep enough to swallow a tire.

And what's the excuse we keep hearing? Climate change. The weather. The rain.

But here's the thing: it rained before 2018 too. We had hurricanes before. We had tropical storms before. And somehow, the roads got fixed. Somehow, the maintenance happened.

Now? Now we're told to just accept it. Accept that driving in Barbados means playing a real-life video game, dodging craters left and right, praying your suspension survives another trip to the supermarket.

The Transport Board: Going, Going, Gone

Speaking of getting around, let's talk about the Transport Board. For decades, the blue buses were a lifeline for working-class Bajans. Students, elderly folks, people who couldn't afford a car: the Transport Board was there.

Now there's talk of privatization. Of selling off what little is left. Of making public transportation something you have to pay more for, controlled by private interests.

Who benefits from that? Not the single mother trying to get to work. Not the schoolchild who needs to get home. Not the pensioner heading to the clinic.



The Squeeze on the Middle Class

Here's where it really hurts.

The cost of living has gone through the roof. Food prices? Up. Utilities? Up. Rent? Up. Everything you need to survive in Barbados costs more than it did seven years ago.

But wages? Salaries? They're standing still. Or worse, going backward.

The middle class: the backbone of any society: is being squeezed out. People who worked hard, got educated, played by the rules, are now struggling to keep their heads above water.

Meanwhile, look at who's doing well. Look at who's building new hotels. Look at who's buying up land. Look at who's getting the contracts.

The gap between the haves and the have-nots isn't just growing: it's becoming a canyon.

Lost vs. Collapsed: The Real Comparison

So let's put this side by side.

During the "lost decade," we had challenges. We had economic struggles. We had a government that could have done better.

But we also had functioning hospitals, genuinely free schools, working buses, and roads that didn't destroy your car.

During the "total collapse," we have a government that promised change but delivered chaos. We have a healthcare system in crisis, an education system quietly being monetized, a transport system being abandoned, and infrastructure that's literally falling apart.

Which decade was really lost? And which one is the true disaster?



A Wake-Up Call for Bajans

This isn't about DLP vs. BLP. This isn't about yellow vs. blue. This is about us. The people of Barbados.

We deserve better than political slogans and blame games. We deserve leaders who actually fix problems instead of just renaming them. We deserve to know where our tax dollars are going and why our quality of life keeps getting worse.

The "lost decade" label was a political tool. A way to win votes. A way to make us forget to ask the hard questions.

But now, seven years in, we can't afford to stay silent anymore. We can't afford to accept excuses about climate change and global economics while our hospitals crumble and our children's education gets sold off piece by piece.

It's time for a real audit. Not one done by politicians or consultants. An audit done by us: the people who live this reality every single day.

The People's Audit Poll

We want to hear from you. Because at the end of the day, the only audit that matters is the one done at the kitchen table and in the supermarket line.

- 1. The "Better Off" Test:** Compared to 7 years ago, is your pocket feeling heavier, lighter, or exactly the same?
- 2. The Priority Check:** If the government had \$1 million to spend right now, where should it go first? (QEH/Healthcare, Road repairs, Keeping school free, or Fixing the Transport Board/Buses)
- 3. The "Excuse" Meter:** When you hear "Climate Change" is the reason for the potholes, do you: A) Believe it, B) Think it's a partial reason, or C) Think it's just a convenient excuse?
- 4. The Transparency Grade:** How clear are you on where your tax dollars are actually going? (1 = Completely lost, 5 = Crystal clear)
- 5. The Big Concern:** What keeps you up at night more? (The rising cost of food vs. The disappearing middle class)
- 6. The Safety Score:** Do you feel safer walking through your community today than you did 10 years ago? (Yes / No / About the same)
- 7. The Utility Squeeze:** Which bill makes you sweat the most when it hits the mat? (Light / Water / Phone & Data)
- 8. The School Fee Reality:** Are you worried that "free education" is slowly becoming a thing of the past in Barbados? (Very worried / A little worried / Not worried)
- 9. The Connection Factor:** Do you feel like you can get ahead today based on your hard work, or is it still mostly about "who you know"? (Hard work / Who you know)

10. The Hope Index: On a scale of 1-10, how hopeful are you that life in Barbados will be better for the next generation than it is for us?

Share your answers. Talk to your neighbors. Let's start the conversation that our leaders don't want us to have.

Because this is our country. And it's time we took it back. 